THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS CATHOLIC REFORM IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

GEORGE V. JOURDAN

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"Great men of all times are those who have understood the cry from the inmost heart of a whole nation or generation, and, consciously or unconsciously, have accomplished what the hour demanded."—
Camb. Mod. Hist., II, 15.

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PREFACE

HITHERTO, the stirring events of the Reformation and Counter-reformation have been the chief, if not the sole, attraction for those who have studied the history of the sixteenth century. That stormy age will always maintain a place of high importance in the thoughts of many, both learned and simple, because in it are to be found the sources of numerous modern problems, religious and political.

Yet the episodes which occurred in the years immediately anterior to the Reformation are also of great interest. When the story of this earlier epoch shall have been fully written, its readers will discover that the men of that era and their doings are not less fascinating, not less worthy of being chronicled than those of the age which follows.

Until a few decades ago the absence of sufficient and accurate information prevented the execution of such a work. But, during the past generation, a number of scholars in England, Germany, and France have been engaged in examining the records of the closing years of the fifteenth century and the opening ones of the sixteenth. The publication of Dean Colet's commentaries and lectures, so ably completed by Mr. Lupton; the biographical labours of Professors Köstlin and Villari, of Messrs. Seebohm and Drummond, and, more recently, of Doctors Delaruelle and Barnaud; the collections of letters and documents made, with immense trouble and care, by M. Herminjard, Doctors Knaake, Horawitz, and Hartfelder; the valuable histories of Bishop Mandell Creighton and Dr. Ludwig Pastor; above all, the arduous enterprise of editing the Epistles of Erasmus, and at the same time arranging their chrono-

logy, undertaken by Herr Arthur Richter and Dr. Max Reich in Germany, and by Mr. Francis Morgan Nichols and Mr. P. S. Allen in England, have assisted greatly in illumining for us an epoch which has an interest and character all its own.

The present treatise is intended as a modest contribution towards a narrative of the principal incidents of those times.

Such terms as are here employed to denote different classes of men will, it is presumed, be fairly clear in their meaning. To the important appellative "Catholic" is assigned, throughout this book, that signification to the explanation of which part of the Introduction has been devoted. "Curialist" is sometimes used here in the strict sense of an official or dependant of the Curia; more usually, however, I have employed it as a synonym for "Papist." The latter word would have been a more convenient, and probably more correct, term than the former, but I have deliberately avoided it, lest the supposition should arise that it was being used in an opprobrious sense. Indeed, it may be proper to declare here, once for all, that, while making no conscious effort to disguise my own convictions, I have endeavoured to eliminate from present consideration everything that pertains to the religious controversies of our own times. My aim in this treatise is not controversial.

I am under many obligations for kindly assistance. To the authorities of the Bodleian Library I owe my thanks for their permitting the verification of references and the transcription of numerous extracts from valuable books in their possession; it is in consequence of their kindness that I am able to print Marquard von Hatstein's epistle to Colet. I desire to thank Mr. T. W. Lyster, the Librarian of the National Library of Ireland, and Mr. A. W. K. Miller, assistant-keeper of the printed books in the Library of the British Museum, for their unfailing courtesy and promptitude in making references for me; the latter supplied me with the

transcription of the epistle of Quonus which forms Appendix III. The officials of the University Library, Liverpool, have also obliged me by allowing me to consult several useful works in their Library. To the Trustees of Dr. Williams's Library, and their Librarian, I am deeply indebted for frequent loans of books and a large number of references. My profound thanks are due to the Board of Trinity College, Dublin, to the Librarian (the Rev. T. K. Abbott, B.D., Litt.D.), and the assistant-librarians, for lending me from their great Library some rare and expensive books, and for assistance rendered in other ways. For help, criticism, and advice tendered me by many good friends, I am grateful, but to none have I more reason to express my gratitude than to the Rev. E. A. Golding, B.A., B.D., Rector of Drimoleague. He has been ever ready to give me any aid in his power, and I have profited considerably from the hints and suggestions which his excellent judgment and critical acumen have afforded me.

My treatise goes forth with the hope that, under the blessing of God, it may prove useful.

G. V. J.

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INTRODUCTION

In times of transition the subtle forces at work are scarcely perceived by the ordinary sort of persons. It is left for a few of more than average capacity to give voice to their consciousness of what all might know, if the power of observing the currents of human thought were a common possession. Those remarkable men, who thus become interpreters to their contemporaries, are oftentimes described as the originators of the movements, of which they, after all, are only the exponents; they are, in truth, as much subject to the spirit of the age in which they live as the rest of mankind. If there be any justification at all for terming such men originators, it must be sought rather in their control, their guidance of forces already existent, than in any actual production of them. All these men, in the past, have undoubtedly performed the task of interpreters to their generation by words of counsel and admonition. But some have illustrated their instructions by their activities, by operating upon the principal tendencies of thought peculiar to their times and directing them to a beneficial fulfilment. Among the latter have been Savonarola and the Catholic Reformers.

The epoch in which they lived was pre-eminently one of transition. Classical learning had sprung up again into new life, and the study of it had developed into a passion. Consequent upon this renascence of intellectual energy, an extension of the empire over which the human mind bore sway was bound to take place and to overleap the accustomed limits. Accordingly, a spirit of critical investigation had made its

way into many departments: Laurentius Valla and Poggio Bracciolini had initiated the science of historical criticism and threatened to exercise their acumen in researches into more sacred provinces. Everything, moreover, tended in the one direction. Politically, socially, as well as intellectually, the middle ages were drawing to an end: the era of simple credulity was giving place to the age of reason. Guarded closely by its legions of champions, religion, for a long time, preserved itself immune from examination by the awakened mental powers of Christendom. But no barrier of ecclesiastical privilege could hope to prevail indefinitely against the irresistible advance of human knowledge, when this was made from several points at once. For, on the one hand was the powerful influence of the Renaissance; on another, the effects of the conciliar doctrines enunciated by D'Ailly, Gerson, and the rest; and on another still, the impressions made upon the minds of western Christians by the Great Papal Schism. All these led towards the one point, an investigation into, not so much the grounds on which the Christian religion rested, as the causes of the notorious contrast between the early Christian Church and its modern descendant. Throughout the whole of the fifteenth century the oft-reiterated appeal for reform had been the token that this investigation was proceeding. It signified, indeed, little else. To translate the demand into concerted action was the very last thing that western Christians, in that age, could see their way to do. As for the laity, they, princes and commoners, again and again entreated the Church to reform herself. As for the clergy, many prominent and saintly dignitaries would have welcomed the removal of prevalent abuses, and did not hesitate to say so openly. But Christendom found itself in a state of hopeless, helpless paralysis. All its yearning aspirations for a return to the simpler, more primitive faith of those Fathers of the Church whose names were

held in exalted public honour, seemed to attain no other result than pious deliberations and empty promises. Christendom could not formulate any definite course of action.

It has to be remembered that the Church, to the Christians of western Europe in those days, stood upon an entirely different foundation from all other institutions. The Church herself was the sole power that was regarded as competent to move in the matter of reform. And whether by this was signified the Church Universal represented in a General Council, as the conciliarists maintained, or the Church represented by her visible Head, the Pope, as the jurists of the Curia asserted, did not seriously alter the position for the numerous advocates of reform.

For several centuries reform had been the subject of petitions, prayers, entreaties; many generations had witnessed the holy lives, and had heard the impassioned summons to righteousness of numbers of preachers reputedly orthodox. Yet these, in their several epochs, passed away one after the other, and still the desired improvements were no whit nearer. The conciliar movement, the one hope of the desperate, the one means available whereby the "Vicar of Christ" might have been induced by pressure to undertake seriously the sacred work of cleansing the Church, was rendered for ever nugatory when Pius II sat as a judge in a cause wherein he was really defendant and issued his Bull *Execrabilis* in January, 1460, making an appeal to a General Council an offence against the authority of the Church. That staunch curialist, Chieregato, advanced this plea in all its ingenuous rigour when Archbishop Andrew of Krain endeavoured to call a General Council together. But, indeed, until one observes how the zealous insistence—even during Savonarola's lifetime and for some years after—of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, upon the necessity of convening a General Council for purposes of reformation, was

succeeded, on his elevation to the Holy See as Julius II, by an equally persistent reluctance to summon any such Council, one cannot take in the full measure of the deadlock brought into the whole question of reform by this Bull *Execrabilis* and the principle of unconditional obedience to the " Vicar of Christ."

However, during the fifteenth century the spirit of inquiry which was manifesting itself in every other department of knowledge was penetrating deeper and deeper into the forbidden territory of religion. Sooner or later the time was certain to come when that would be attempted from without the ecclesiastical system which apparently could not be effected from within. This is indeed a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon that happened in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century when the Lutherans and the Calvinists revised the common ideals of Catholicity and Unity.

The active movement in the direction of reform, which a few pious churchmen conducted during the opening years of the sixteenth century, was essentially a movement within the bosom of the Church herself. It initiated no spirit of revolt ; it took no concerted measures for attack, or even meditated them ; it simply represented the simultaneous efforts of a handful of noble churchmen, who were also noble Christians, to remove by holy teaching and pious action some of the blemishes that dimmed the glory of " Holy Mother Church." Inasmuch as the reformers were the mouthpiece of all the best souls (of whom, to the credit of Christianity, there were not a few) in the Church of that period, the labours of each, though sometimes little connected with those of the other, may be fittingly regarded and denominated as part of a Movement towards Catholic Reform.

This movement appears to have derived its origin from Savonarola. Nevertheless, it is proper to point out that he was its originator only in the sense already

indicated; he was the first to translate into spoken language the thoughts that were taking shape in the minds of his contemporaries. After him there arose a number of teachers whose tendencies, some in one particular, some in another, were in the same direction as his own. And these, in so far as they reproduced in any degree his methods, his teachings, or his designs, can be termed his successors, although, no doubt, they had not derived their very agreements with him so much from Savonarola himself as from the spirit of the age which was influencing them even as it had previously influenced him. It is in this sense that John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, may be represented as a successor of the Florentine preacher. Certainly, as will be presently stated, there is reason to believe that the Dominican, probably to some considerable extent, affected the mental outlook of the English graduate. But, at the same time, additional forces existed, both in England and throughout western Europe, which, assuredly, had no small share in the moulding of that noble life. In other words, the influence of Savonarola upon Colet was only one of the powers by which the latter was swayed, and the Englishman was, in his own way, a product of the age no less than the Florentine friar himself. A like opinion is to be expressed concerning numerous others of that era, of Linacre, Grocyn, More, Fisher, Erasmus, Pirckheimer, Reuchlin, Lefèvre, Briçonnet, the Princess Margaret, Rhenanus, Roussel, Budé, and even (in the early portion of his career) Luther. A common spirit pervaded their being. The "voices from heaven," to borrow the figure of Aegidius of Viterbo, "had spoken to them," and, in consequence, they often re-stated the views of one another, in almost identical terms, without being guilty of plagiarism.

How far the personality of Savonarola dominated the generation immediately subsequent to his own can never be adequately computed. In his native country he was affectionately remembered, and many of his

compatriots bore the spiritual impressions they had received from him for many years after his death. Yet, outside the confines of Italy, only rare indications of any acquaintance with his name occur, but these, in spite of their fewness and brevity, imply a greater knowledge of his character and opinions than might, at first, be supposed. The tones of his voice, as it were, echo and re-echo in the most unexpected places, at the most notable crises, until they finally vanish in the turmoil of the Reformation.

It was the Italian expedition of King Charles VIII (1494-5), which brought this famous friar into prominence. He was already notable as a preacher of righteousness, as one indeed who aroused his countrymen to a consciousness of the evils of that age. His endeavours to introduce reforms among both clergy and people had already been attended by some success when his activities were given a much wider scope by the arrival on Italian soil of the French king. That monarch had come in order to establish his claim to the crown of Naples, but, when he descended upon Italy, it seemed to the Italians as if Savonarola's prophecy of the new Cyrus was receiving speedy fulfilment, and the minds of the Florentines were the more impressed by the words of such a remarkable man as the Dominican appeared to be.

But King Charles disappointed the hopes of the Dominican ; he made no attempt to effect an amelioration of ecclesiastical affairs. With marvellous rapidity and success he traversed Italy and won a kingdom ; with still greater speed and no less good fortune he conducted his retreat.

To Florence the withdrawal of the French from Italy was a severe blow, inasmuch as it left the Republic open to the assaults of the League. But to Savonarola, whose only protector was gone, it meant certain destruction. Around him the clouds began to gather. Outside the city, his enemies were seeking to compass his ruin.

The Pope was excited against him, the Sforza actively hostile, the Medici solicitous of restoration. Inside the city, he waged a daily contest with foes who rapidly grew in strength and in capacity for injurious assaults. No reformer's path is either smooth or easy. To fancy that it ought to be otherwise than difficult is to expect the impossible. Yet, where Savonarola is concerned, the deepest feelings of commiseration are awakened, not merely by a discernment of the difficulties which arose incidentally from the tasks he had undertaken to perform, but by the reflection that the very part of his labours which lay closest to his heart, the betterment of religion and morals in Florence, was just that in which he was destined to effect the least results. His ill success therein must be ascribed less to the ideals he harboured, or to his methods of realizing them, than to the notoriously volatile character of the people with whom he had to deal.

During the stormy days in which his life closed, the great hope which supported Savonarola was that of a General Council which should accomplish the work of reform. He broached it publicly in his Lenten Sermons of 1497 :—

> Jesus Christ hath many servants, and great numbers of them, concealed in Germany, France, and Spain, are now bewailing this evil. In all cities, in all manors and convents, there be some inspired with this fire of zeal. They send to whisper somewhat in my ear, and I reply : Remain concealed until ye hear the summons—Lazare, veni foras !

Savonarola in this hope did not stand alone : a cardinal had declared that he would not return to Rome until God reformed the Church, the general of a monastic order had given expression to an eager longing for reform, and the Sorbonne had delivered to the French king its opinion that a General Council was advisable. Yet, towards the end, even this expectation Savonarola reluctantly and sorrowfully gave

up, observing that a reforming Council would have to be composed, for the most part, of the very men who required most to be reformed or deposed.

The relations between Savonarola and Pope Alexander at this juncture are not difficult of comprehension. It was to be expected that the latter would take measures in his own defence. The endeavour to prove that his feelings towards the Florentine reformer were those of appreciative kindness is somewhat beside the question. No one who has studied the character of the Borgia, save an apologist or panegyrist, is ever likely to make the attempt. Indeed a man of much sweeter nature than Alexander might be excused easily for harbouring thoughts, or compassing the means, of punishing one who stood in the way of his projects. The character of those projects, and the means he took to accomplish them, are what cast reproach upon Alexander and justify the stubborn opposition of Savonarola. That resistance neither blandishments nor bribes could turn aside. Hence the Pope's enmity was aroused, and, if he hesitated for some time to develop schemes of vengeance, this is to be accounted principally due to a lack of fitting opportunity. Moreover, the hints, however veiled, of the possibility of a General Council, were not such as Alexander could hearken to without fear, since the most powerful member of the College of Cardinals, Giuliano della Rovere, afterwards Julius II, was at this very time spreading a disparagement of his right to the papal tiara.

A decision has been arrived at regarding the real grounds upon which Savonarola suffered. G. F. Pico della Mirandola, nephew of that erudite Pico who had died in 1494, gave, as from the lips of one of the papal judges, the statement that Savonarola was destroyed "non quia mereretur, sed quia sic Pontifici placuisset, nec Florentinis displicuisset" ("not because he deserved it, but because such was the Pope's wish and the Florentines offered no objection"). Contemporary apologists for

Alexander, indeed, attempted to convict the Florentine preacher of heresy and disobedience to the Church. But the defenders of the Dominican were able to maintain that the charge of heresy rested upon no doctrinal foundation, and that "not even a Pope can determine that to be heretical which is not."[1] Beyond all doubt, the destruction of Savonarola resulted, in part, from political reasons, that is to say, from his political attitude towards the Pope, and, in part, from his endeavours to have a General Council convened, that is to say, from his attitude towards Alexander in an ecclesiastical aspect. With the latter reason alone are we concerned. It is the more serious charge against him, because it lends colour to the assertion that he contemplated a plan of action which would probably have involved a schism in the Christian Church, if the chief work which the Council would have had to accomplish, viz., the deposition of Alexander, had not eventuated in complete success.[2] But, as a reminder to all who advance this aspect of the matter, we may here remark that not so many generations before Savonarola's times, the Christian Church had had cause for gratitude to a General Council for healing a a deplorable schism introduced by rival claimants to the papal see; and, with the experience of Pisa, Constance, and Basle before their eyes, the Fathers of the Christian Church might reasonably be supposed to have been capable, at the end of the fifteenth century, of either displacing Alexander or undertaking measures for the thorough amendment of ecclesiastical affairs. And, it must always be remembered, that the lack of such a Council, and a serious decision to effect the much needed reform of the Church in its Head and members, are responsible for the present cleavage of western

[1] *Vita R. P. Fr. Hieronymi Savonarolae Ferrariensis, Ord. Praedicatorum*, Authore Ill. D. Joan. Franc. Pico Mirandulae Concordiaeque Principe, Parisiis, 1674, I, 110 *et seq.*, II, 518-520.

[2] Lucas (Herbert, S. J.), *Savonarola*, London, 1899, p. 367.

Christendom into two nearly equal parts, Roman Catholic and Reformed. Savonarola and the good men before him advocated the convening of a reforming Council. After them, that excellent Teutonic pontiff, Adrian VI, justified their demands by acknowledging the need of a Council, when the time for it had well-nigh passed away for ever. One is free to surmise that possibly the results of Savonarola's scheme of a General Council might truly have been those which that great man desired so ardently, and that they might have rendered unnecessary the later revolt of Luther and Calvin.

That Savonarola should, in the heyday of his pulpit eloquence, have swayed the best minds in Florence is not wonderful. The strength of his character, the force of his convictions, and the essential truth of the pictures he drew of the degradation of Christianity, were calculated to exercise vast influence over the grave and thoughtful amongst the men of his own and other countries. But that he, after his condemnation and death, should have continued to retain the place he had once held in the thoughts of the majority of those whom he had formerly so deeply impressed, was a thing by no means to be expected. Many lost the consciousness of his ascendancy when his voice ceased to vibrate in their ears. Others felt that the ecclesiastical censures passed on him were evidences that he had been an impostor. Doubtless, too, most of his ardent followers experienced a shock to their faith when the awaited miracle failed to intervene in time to save him from his adversaries. Ficino, the famous Platonic philosopher, was only one of many who revised their opinions altogether as to the person and mission of Savonarola. Consequently, with the passing of the Friar, his own distinctive work, in its religious or moral aspect, had almost reached annihilation. Still, it would be very wrong to say that the force of his teaching perished with him. Not a few of his compatriots had received

an impression which, apart from any estimate of the man himself, they bore undimmed throughout their lives. Michael Angelo is a notable example of these. Savonarola's influence manifested itself chiefly in the revival of a spirit of religious inquiry, the effects of which can be traced far beyond the limits of the small company that remained faithful to his memory. An obvious change took place in the whole character of art towards the close of the fifteenth century, which, as it reflected the operation of religious forces in the minds of that generation, can only be explained by supposing the ascendancy of Savonarola's teaching. If the Friar be represented as an opponent of the Classical Renaissance, it must be, at the same time, recollected that he was no foe to either literature, philosophy, science, or art, in themselves, but only of the base uses to which they were put. On the contrary, there is evidence to prove that he urged the members of his own community to study both Greek and Hebrew, not, it is true, for mere purposes of erudition, but for increasing their skill in the work of evangelization.

Besides the literati and artists of her own race, Italy always contained a large body of foreign students and learned men passing through her celebrated academies. Upon these, no less than upon the native scholars, the character of Savonarola left an indelible mark. It is curious to note how his thoughts, his ideals, almost his very words, are reproduced by them without any accompanying mention of his name. Yet, this reluctance to speak of the source of their aspirations does not indicate a depreciation of his aims, or an inability to absorb the valuable portion of his doctrine when all that was merely fantastic and illusory about him had been dissipated with his ashes. Accordingly, in subsequent years, though Colet in England and Lefèvre in France afford tokens of opinions closely similar to Savonarola's, and though both visited Italy at a time when the thunder of the preacher's Florentine sermons

was echoing through that country, no word escapes them as to any knowledge of the man's existence. If it were not for the course of their own thoughts, one might freely surmise that they had never heard of him. For all that, at the twelfth and final sitting of the Lateran Council, which ended 16th March, 1517, Savonarola's apologist and biographer, Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola, presented to the Pope an *Oratio de Reformandis Moribus* that recalled the censures of the Prophet-Preacher.

> It was strange that the flaming words of the prophet should rise once more from the grave at the moment when their terrible prophecy was to be fulfilled in Germany.[1]

To these words Luther's own bear witness when, in his short preface to the Wittenberg (1523) edition of Savonarola's *Meditatio pia super Psalmos* 31 *et* 51, he voiced the sentiments of many outside the Dominican's adherents :

> The Papacy had ventured to think that by its malediction it had extinguished the memory of so great a man; but behold he lives! and is held in blessed remembrance.[2]

Contemporary historians might, where possible, suppress all mention of him, as Cardinal Bembo in his bilingual *History of Venice*, or accord him scant and depreciatory notices, as Guicciardini in his *History of the Wars of Italy*, and Paulus Jovius in his *Vita Leonis X*, lib. I., and in his *Historiarum Sui Temporis* lib. V, nevertheless, as Luther truly said, his memory endured, and his teachings found many a home in far distant lands.

For the class of reformers of whom the great Dominican was the first in point of time, and perhaps also in magnanimity, no better generic title is to be found,

[1] *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, II, 31.
[2] *Luthers Werke*, Weimar edition, XII, 248.

descriptive of their outlook upon contemporary religion and the propriety of ecclesiastical order, than that of Catholic Reformers. Since, however, that title has been, by common usage, in the Roman obedience, confined to those who, about the time of the Council of Trent, affected some measures of ecclesiastical improvement among the adherents of the Papacy, an explanation of the sense in which it is employed in this present treatise might appear suitable, indeed absolutely necessary.

Savonarola, at the close of his career, was in conflict with the wearer of the papal tiara. For all that, it would be misleading to imagine that he, at any time, regarded the papal supremacy in a manner similar to that in which Luther came to view it. He believed in the catholicity of the Church as a necessary attribute of that divine institution, and, as all corporate bodies must have a head, he sincerely accepted the headship of the Roman See. His quarrel with Alexander VI was not a quarrel with the Head of the Church, but with Roderigo Borgia. Neither to him nor to the reforming teachers who followed him did their right to be considered Catholics altogether depend on the quality of their allegiance to the Roman See. That is to say, since the Universal Church found and recognized in the local Roman Church its mother and mistress, western Christians generally, in that epoch, believed it essential to their catholicity to adhere to Rome and serve its bishops loyally ("Ecclesiam Romanam agnosco, quam opinor a catholica non dissentire"—*Eras. Op.*, III, 544A). But that they entertained a doctrine of allegiance to the Papacy such as has been propounded in more modern times is very far from being a fact. There were, indeed, among them too many consummate theologians for them to be misled into the idea that the ancient Fathers of the Church had ever conceived of any other principal ground for catholicity than pure doctrine. For when, in those early days of Christianity,

the orthodox used to oppose the catholicity of the Church to the sectarianism of the heretics, they referred to the purity of the Church's teaching. Yet even in this use of the term the word had a larger signification which was never quite out of sight. As an appellation "Catholic" implied unity, and with SS. Cyprian and Augustine it possessed this technical sense almost entirely. St. Augustine frequently used *catholica* as "a current expression, a substantive, of which the sense is invariably that of *ecclesia catholica*, and never that of *fides* or *religio*. It is not the African doctor who introduces the locution : he naturalizes it, as one may say, for towards 340 . . . the word had made its way and become popular. . . . No Donatist, if a stranger were to ask him the way to the *Catholica*, would have dreamt of directing him to a Donatist church."[1] Nor in the subsequent ages were these two complementary parts of the connotation forgotten. The teachings of the Church, on the contrary, were universal within the limits of the world as then known. Here was a ready and unanswerable apologia for orthodox Christendom : the Catholic faith had an irrefutable witness to its truth in the local extension which its purity had won for it, and the strength of a *fait accompli* as against a mere tentative suggestion.

But universality could not exist except by means of an ordered unity, the general recognition of a centralizing authority. That centre was found in the episcopate ; the highest court of appeal in Christendom known during the first six centuries or more was the œcumenical convocation of bishops or General Council. Undoubtedly, in those times, the Christian Church presented the appearance of a commonwealth in which the episcopate exercised the functions of government. Among the bishops one stood pre-eminent. His see

[1] Dom H. Leclercq, in Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d' Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, Paris (Letouzey et Ané, éditeurs), 1910, t. 2, 2me. partie, col. 2631-2.

retained somewhat of the glamour which still lingered round the ancient metropolis, and gained no little prestige from its traditional connection with the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. The records of the early days of Christianity manifest the veneration and respect paid to the Church of Rome and its bishop by the rest of Christendom. But its bishop, if he was accorded the place of first patriarch of the Church, was only regarded as *primus inter pares*; his jurisdiction was not accounted different in character from that exercised by his less prominent fellow-bishops.[1] Not until the Carolingian period did the Papacy attain a semblance of "monarchical" authority. Even during the centuries subsequent to Charlemagne the power of the pope advanced only by slow degrees.

By the fifteenth century his authority had become by universal assent in western Europe the regimen of a monarch, but not yet that of an absolute monarch; there still lingered in the public mind the common belief that in the unanimity of opinion expressed by an Œcumenical or General Council was to be found the most certain means for ascertaining the mind of the Church Universal.[2] With the pontificate of Pius II,

[1] Since the sixteenth century, S. Cyprian's *De Unitate Ecclesiae* has been cited as evidence that the bishops of Rome occupied in the third century a monarchical position, as for instance (in the early seventeenth century) by Duvallius, *De suprema Rom. Pont. in Eccl. potest.*, pars prima, quaestio II, sect. II, and quite recently by Thurston and Joyce in Herbermann's *Catholic Encyclopedia*, III, *sub vocibus* "Catholic" and "Church." Dr. Bright has, however, made it clear that not only has St. Cyprian's doctrine of unity been misapplied, but that St. Augustine's acknowledgment of Roman *auctoritas* did not by any means include an admission of papal supremacy (*Roman See in the Early Church*, London, 1896, sections (VI) and (XVIII), pp. 39 *et seq.*, 126 *et seq.*).

[2] It is not without some sympathetic interest that we note the ingenuous confession of the late Dr. James Gairdner to a like belief: "There is one sense in which I myself would confess that the Church cannot err . . . Undoubtedly, His followers do possess among them, taken as a whole, a fund of truth which cannot possibly be diminished or weakened as we go on."—*Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, III, Introd., p. XIX.

however, a new theory of papal government came into being: the precedency of honour and respect had advanced to a precedency of right which in its turn had given place to a monarchical jurisdiction, but now the Papacy demanded, in fact, the jurisdiction of an absolute monarch. But churchmen generally were slow to change the conception of ecclesiastical authority with which they had grown, during so many ages, familiar. In their eyes the pope was incontestably the Head of the Church, but they had not as yet arrived at the point of regarding him as its supreme and irresponsible ruler on earth; General Councils were still, in their thought, the final court of appeal in the Christian Church. It is, accordingly, impossible to find before the middle of the sixteenth century any extensive acceptance of this new theory, except by the extreme partisans of the Curia. And, indeed, a considerable number of the thinking men of this era (the early decades of the sixteenth century) had, in consequence of their patristic studies, reverted to the ancient estimate of the relative values of the authority of the bishops of Rome and Œcumenical Councils. Even Aegidius of Viterbo and Pope Adrian VI felt that the papal claims to supreme authority in the Church had been excessive and detrimental to the good of Christendom.[1]

At the period, therefore, with which we are dealing, the age of Savonarola and the first couple of decades after him, the right to be considered a Catholic did not, in general estimation, depend upon an acceptance of

[1] *Vita Savonarolae*, I, 108; *Epist. Lutheri*, fol. 166, 191vo.—193. Cp. *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, II, 32.

For a statement of the claim to an absolute monarchical jurisdiction, see Duvallius, pars prima, quaestio VIII. (pp. 87-91 in Puyol's edition), and M. le comte J. de Maistre, *Du Pape*, Lyon et Paris, 1821, liv. I, chap. I-VI, and liv. IV, chap. V. The *Constitutio dogmatica prima de Ecclesia Christi* issued during the fourth session of the Vatican Council of 1870 (appended by Puyol to his edition of Duvallius) contains the ultimate definition of it.

papal absolutism. A man was then a Catholic if he embraced sincerely the doctrines and dogmas of the Church which had been defined by authority, so far as they were understood to be so defined, and if he also recognized the essential unity of the Church and the centralized regimen which that united organization rendered inevitable.[1]

Consequently, among the declarations of those who are here termed Catholic Reformers may be found frequent protestations of their submissiveness to the papal jurisdiction: their yearning desires to improve the state of contemporary religion are equalled by their anxiety to succeed in this without impugning that authority.

It is true that the aims of these men were inherently futile, and the fidelity with which they pursued them might have been fittingly described as pathetic, if tragic had not been a more suitable word for implying the perils, sufferings, and misconceptions into which their projects led them. Their lot, in truth, was cast in an era when two parties which represented antagonistic ideals of progress came for the first time face to face in opposition. Not that their enterprise was in itself puerile or unsuitable for the needs of Christendom; on the contrary, it reflected the highest honour on their piety and their disinterested zeal for the purification of religion. But it did not harmonize with the genius of their age. With neither class of antagonists could the Catholic reformers feel in sympathy, and their own strivings after a Catholic reformation were not in accord with the plans of either side. To the adherents of the one party, therefore, Erasmus was a traitor, a heretic; to the enthusiasts of the other party a cowardly dissembler, a Balaam; to some Lefèvre was a heretic, but to others a timid, remorseful creature; and, earlier still, when as yet there were no parties,

[1] Cp. Sir Thos. More's ep. to Crumwel—Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, etc., Clarendon Press, 1822, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 201-2.

Colet was regarded by some as disloyal and censorious, by others as unprogressive and reactionary. All three would have been condemned to death if their enemies could have obtained the fulfilment of their wishes. So, too, in the previous generation, Savonarola was represented as a charlatan, an imposter, a rebel, but also as not prudent or ambitious enough to be a revolutionist—not perfect enough for an angel from heaven, nor bold enough for a villain. The seeming inconsistencies which these reformers brought into their performance of the noble works they had taken in hand came entirely from a desire to introduce the new without violently displacing the old. Many Christians of the present day will find it hard to repress a sigh at the regretful circumstance that the scheme of peaceful reform, of spreading biblical knowledge, of making religion purer and more accordant with the Master's wishes, which these good men advocated or promoted, did not prove successful. The story of their attempt and failure is, unfortunately, not an isolated one. It has recurred again and again, on countless occasions, since the first beginnings of human history, whenever grave changes have been under consideration. At all such times, there are certain to be two hostile parties in conflict, but just as certainly a number of men are to be found standing between them, capable of perceiving the amount of justice and right which belongs to each side, but prevented, by that very insight, from resisting or espousing the cause of either. And men of this type, the men of moderate counsel, have nearly always pursued the middle course, not from any desire to escape the possible misfortunes of partisanship, but from conscientious scruples. How often, alas, have they failed! How often has their advice proved unacceptable, and received the condemnatory epithet of lukewarmness! How often, too, have they been accused of interested motives! And strange as it may appear, in almost every case the moderate men have represented

the majority of their contemporaries ; the extremists, those who vociferated so loudly, on the one side or the other, have seldom indeed had a large following—for example, in regard to the conflict of religious teachers in France during the second decade of the sixteenth century, neither Noël Béda nor Guillaume Farel can be taken as the true spokesman of their compatriots.

In recent historical works, which have had this period under review, particulars more or less accurate have been given of the events and persons that occupy the chapters which here follow. Professor Lindsay, in his *History of the Reformation*—to mention one amongst several notable English books—furnishes an admirably full and reliable account of them. And indeed, so valuable is this part of his work that, if he had set them forth in a just perspective, he would have anticipated the main purpose of our own treatise. But the arrangement of his information into a series of biographies is calculated to impress upon a reader two wrong notions: that the life-work of each personage stood alone, was centred in itself, and that it merely formed, as it were, a separate little rivulet which emptied itself into the great flood of the Protestant Reformation. A truer representation of their life-work would have been to have depicted it as part of a movement, which, in actual fact, was independent of the Protestant Reformation, and which can be said to have been introductory to that subsequent revolt only in the sense that it preceded it. Moreover, without seeking to detract from the excellence of Professor Lindsay's production, we believe he entirely misstates the religious and mental standpoint of Colet, Lefèvre, and the rest, when he terms them "Christian Humanists." No doubt we can imagine that he experienced a difficulty in finding a suitable appellation which would adequately denote the opinions and ideas of the class of men to whom they belonged. But Mr. Seebohm has afforded a clue to the fittest name for them by denominating three of them (Colet,

Erasmus, and More) *Oxford Reformers*. They were indeed Reformers ; and by no stretch of signification could Colet, or Fisher, or Lefèvre, or Briçonnet, or Roussel, be included among humanists. This conception of themselves they, in their life-time, omitted no opportunity of denying. Erasmus, Budé, and perhaps More, might be fairly described as Christian Humanists, but unquestionably none of the rest. It is observable how all of them clung to their catholicity, and they would have been grievously hurt if they had known that any one at any time would have been unable to realize that, however they might be reformers by inclination, they were Catholics by conviction. Their glory is that they maintained undimmed throughout their career their ideal of the Church of Christ as a Catholic society, and that no possible combination of self-interest with hopes of success for their schemes could have availed to detach them from that Catholic unity. By those who had begun to arrogate to themselves the name of Catholic in a hitherto unusual sense, their plans for spreading evangelical truth might be frustrated ; their designs, and their methods of accomplishing them impugned ; their own persons and characteristics held up to public reprobation ; their peace disturbed, their lives jeopardized ; but loyal they remained to the Divine Lord's appointment that His Church should be one in Him.

Professor Henry Lemonnier, in Lavisse's *Histoire de France*, tome V, has formed a just conception of the standpoint from which Lefèvre and his friends viewed the whole question of reformation. He has termed the movement they conducted *La Réforme pacifique*. A happier title it would be difficult to invent. We feel that if the scope of the historical work towards which he was contributing had allowed him to include the measures of peaceful reform attempted in other nations besides France, Professor Lemonnier would have treated the entire movement with similar good fortune

and accuracy. Erudite Frenchmen, however, in these days, are inclined to dwell with rather too much emphasis upon the literary side of all the activities of the sixteenth century. We do not deny, for we cannot, that that side did exist, and, moreover, that it was important. But if the writings of the past have erred in dealing almost exclusively with the religious aspect of the life-work of such men as Lefèvre in France and of Reuchlin and Erasmus in Germany, this error will not be corrected by an exaggeration of the literary. Their labours bore, undoubtedly, a dual aspect. In one sense, Lefèvre was a philosopher, an Aristotelian ; in another, an expounder of the Scriptures, and a religious reformer. From one point of view, Erasmus was an eminent humanist; from another, a pioneer of biblical criticism, who consecrated his marvellous learning to the service of religion. In one sense, Reuchlin was a profound hebraist, versed in oriental lore and mysticism; in another, a champion of biblical studies. We frankly confess to a belief that no narrative of the lives and works of these persons will be complete if it does not estimate truly the two directions of their activities.

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS CATHOLIC REFORM IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

BIBLE TEACHING AT OXFORD BEFORE COLET

About the time of the French invasion a young Englishman, John Colet by name, was travelling through Italy for purposes of study and education. He had already graduated M.A. at Oxford, and had spent some time in the University of Orleans.[1]

Of his youth and early manhood few particulars are available. He was the eldest, and only surviving, child of a numerous family born to Henry and Christian Colet in London. The exact date of his birth is not known, but Erasmus, by stating that Colet was two or three months younger than himself, has provided a means of calculating it with a remarkable degree of accuracy. This would fix upon the early days of 1467 as the approximate date of Colet's birth.[2] His father by success in business as a mercer and by the political connections with the Tudor house which resulted from

[1] *Erasmi Opera*, Lugduni Batavorum 1703—, III, 456A, 182B; Lupton (J. H.), *Life of Colet*, London, 1887, p. 43.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 456C; Nichols (F. M.), *Letters of Erasmus to his fifty-first year*, London, 1901-4, I, 13-14 and App. V.; Allen (P. S.), *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, Clarendon Press, 1906-1910, I, 578. Allen, in his App. II to vol. I, says that Nichols is probably correct in assigning 27-28 October 1466 as the most likely date of Erasmus's birth.

his marriage with a lady whose family was allied to that of the Duke of Buckingham, became a person of considerable importance. Twice, that is to say, in 1486 and 1495, Henry Colet was Lord Mayor of London. Before the second occasion he had attained the honour of knighthood. As can be easily imagined, Sir Henry Colet had powerful interest at hand for the ecclesiastical advancement of his son. Accordingly, we find that Colet, whilst still young and a layman, gained possession of four parochial charges.[1] In addition, he occupied two prebends, that of Good-Easter in St. Martin's-le-Grand and that of Botivant in York. Other preferments were received by Colet, but those recited fell to him before he arrived even at Deacon's orders. Yet, when compared with numerous other lists of that period, his is quite a modest one. It has to be remembered that, in those days, the heaping of dignity upon dignity and benefice upon benefice was not looked upon as constituting a wrong done to either Church or people. Such accumulations of preferment were regarded as collections of marks of honour, and the more benefices a man then held the more clearly defined was his importance in the world. Although Wolsey in England and Georges d'Amboise in France, both of them ministers and favourites of their respective monarchs, obtained, either for themselves or their relatives, many promotions,[2] they were easily outdistanced, in their own time, by Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, of whom it is said that "he held twenty-seven separate offices, of which the abbeys of Fonte Dulce, Passignano, and Monte Cassino were among the most lucrative."[3]

[1] Lupton, *Colet*, chap. VII; Knight (Dr. S.), *Life of Colet*, Oxford 1823, App. II, p. 279; Seebohm (F.), *Oxford Reformers*, London, 1896, App. D.

[2] Galt (John), *Life of Wolsey*, London, 1846, p. 12; Taunton (E. L.), *Thomas Wolsey, Legate and Reformer*, London, 1902, pp. 31-35; Creighton (Bp. Mandell), *Hist. of the Papacy*, London, 1899, IV, 308, V, 64, 102.

[3] Vaughan (Herbert M.), *The Medici Popes*, London, 1908, p. 10.

As to the reasons which induced Colet to devote himself to the study and exposition of the Bible no sufficient information is obtainable. Possibly he gradually realized that some courageous efforts ought to be made to revive religious knowledge. This process may have begun early in his life, perhaps during his student years at Oxford, perhaps during his home-life in London. In either place, he was likely enough to have imbibed some ideas of the kind from Lollard sources, which, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, were neither few nor unknown, though proscribed.[1] From what is known of Colet's character, the inference is a fair one that he must have been troubled and dissatisfied with the low condition of religious knowledge which he observed all around him in England, and still less content with the unfitness of the general body of the parochial clergy for the discharge of pastoral functions.

He beheld religion at a low ebb in England, but when he went on his foreign travels, his mind, already bent on the observation of the state of religion, received from every side impressions of such a nature as to impel him to adopt some course of action which might be useful to effect amendment. Amid the classic culture of Italy he saw open, manifest paganism; under the papal tiara, ambition and lust; under the mitre, intrigue, hatred, and revenge; among the princes, neither good faith, nor justice, nor desire for peace. He saw the Head of the Church in league with the Infidel, though the latter was threatening to advance to the further conquest of Christian territory.[2] In every

[1] Gairdner (James, C. B., LL.D.), *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, London, 1908—, I, 100: "Even when its first violence was subdued, Lollardy remained a latent power in the community. Its leaven, indeed, was very widely diffused. Its teachings, for good or evil, have influenced human thought and action more or less through all succeeding centuries. They mingled with and domineered over the Reformation, though they did not bring it on."

[2] Observe the curious and disgraceful negotiations between Pope Alexander and the Sultan Bajazet regarding the captivity of Prince Djem

direction he perceived that faith was dying, or dead, and that an insane credulity had led a sceptical race to put reliance in astrological forecasts and talismans.[1] All this and much more he beheld, and it seemed to acquaint him with the great need of the period—a religion, or rather the restoration of religion to an effectual exercise of its vivifying powers.[2] From the midst of the iniquity and irreligion he heard the thunder of the Prophet-preacher endeavouring to turn Florence, and Italy with her, to Christ. He could not foresee that the very people for whom Savonarola was then labouring would in the end burn their prophet. All that he saw and heard in his travels assisted in shaping the resolution which was forming in his mind.

There is no record concerning the time of Colet's travels in Italy or the places he visited in that country. We only know that, having concluded his University course at Oxford, he travelled through France and Italy about the time of King Charles's fruitless expedition to Naples. If Colet followed in the track of the French army, he came to Florence at the moment when the

at Rome—*Diary of John Burchard of Strasburg*, Eng. trans. by Dr. A. H. Mathew, London, 1910, pp. 239-246, 381 *et seq.*; Creighton, IV, 225, 239, App. 9; Pastor (Dr. L.), *Hist. of the Popes*, edited by Antrobus and Kerr, London, 1891—, V, 428-430, 465; cf. Bembo (Card. Petrus), *Rerum Venetarum Historiae* (*Opere*, Venice, 1729, tom. I), pp. 24-25, 37.

[1] Armstrong (E.), *Lorenzo de' Medici*, London, 1900, p. 342; Roscoe (T.), *Leo X*, Liverpool, 1805, I, 274 and IV, 78; Lodovico the Moor used to consult his astrologer in important affairs, see Villari (Prof. Pasquale), *Machiavelli*, Eng. trans. by Linda Villari, London, 1883, Intro. chap. IV, 2. Cp. the words of Savonarola in a sermon preached during Advent, 1493—Villari (Prof. P.), *Savonarola*, Eng. trans. by Linda Villari, London, 1889, I, 183.

[2] Abbot Gasquet, *Eve of the Reformation*, London, 1900, chap. X, is correct in saying that there were many instances of simple piety at that period. These examples, however, do not destroy the mass of evidence that can be adduced to show that the Christian religion was then in a perilous state through the degradation into which it had fallen. The cases of church benefactions which the learned Benedictine cites are not adequate proofs that the spirit of devotion was deep, active, and intelligent. Cp. Erasmus, *Annotationes*, 4th edit., p. 183.

Dominican was denouncing woes upon Italy and the Church, and delivering sermons upon the books of the Bible of a kind seldom heard in those days. From such a consideration would follow the natural inference that Savonarola exerted direct or indirect influence upon him in turning his mind towards the need of reform. The statement of Erasmus, regarding Colet in Italy, that "there he gave himself up wholly to the study of the sacred writers,"[1] deserves notice, especially because the Italian students of that day usually concerned themselves only with the practical side of ecclesiastical studies, namely, Canon Law, as at Bologna.[2] Colet, in short, was just as likely to have devoted himself to the study of the Bible in England as in Italy, unless there had been some potent agency present in the latter country which administered to him a strong impulse towards that course. And, further, this supposition gains confirmation from the additional assertion that his biblical studies were the outcome of a determination formed during his Italian journey to preach Gospel sermons to his own people. It seems evident that it was the fiery preacher of righteousness in Florence who had aroused the spirit of the sober-minded young Englishman. On many points of doctrine Colet has expressed opinions which have afforded additional reasons for arriving at the same conclusion.[3]

Yet, strange to say, never once does Colet mention Savonarola or give a sign that he had heard of him. His silence would appear to be quite as intentional as

[1] *Eras. Op.* III, 456A; Pol. Vergilii Urb., *Anglicae historiae*, lib. XXVI, Basileae, 1546, *ad finem*: "Se ad divinarum literarum studium contulit, et Paulum sibi praeceptorem delegit, in eoque cum Oxonij et Cantabrigiae, tum in Italia, ita exercuit, ut homo factus ad unguem, sicut aiunt, cum domum redijt, coeperit Londini ubi natus est, Paulinas legere epistolas, et in templis saepe concionari. . . ."

[2] Rashdall (Dr. Hastings), *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Clarendon Press, 1895, I, 251-3.

[3] Seebohm, pp. 37, 38, and notes, institutes a comparison between the doctrines of Savonarola and Colet, and assumes their identity.

that of Cardinal Bembo, but not to express a similarity of disposition towards the great Dominican. Until recently, only Mr. J. S. Harford had asserted an actual residence of Colet in Florence, and direct personal relations between Savonarola and him.[1] A few years ago, however, the same decision was set forth in an historical work of unquestionable importance.[2] Indeed, it may now be taken as the final opinion arrived at by reputable historians on a review of all the existing evidence. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, though pursuing in England one line of Savonarola's work, Colet preserved a complete silence as to the name of the Prophet-preacher.[3]

The same autumn[4] which witnessed the safe return of King Charles VIII to a secure throne, after his futile pursuit of a doubtful one, found Colet in Paris enjoying the society of men like Lefèvre, Gaguin, Budé, and others, who could enter into and appreciate his plans. With his mind fully made up as to the course he was about to take in his own country, he soon returned to his parents in London. But not to remain long there. He felt too powerfully the attracting force of a great spiritual work, which drew him away, after a few months

[1] *Life of Michael Angelo Buonarroti*, London, 1857, I, 55.

[2] Lavisse et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale*, Paris, 1894, IV, 555. They are, however, probably mistaken in asserting an acquaintance of Colet with the court of the Medici, for the latter were exiles from Florence at the only time he could have visited the city on the Arno.

[3] It may be thought strange that Erasmus, Colet's friend, should have twice mentioned the great Dominican, once in 1519 (*Eras. Op.* III, 517D), and again in 1520 (*ibid.*, 605A), and on each occasion classed Savonarola's career in the same category with the detestable Dominican imposture at Berne in 1509, of which Mr. Belfort Bax, *German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages*, London, 1894, App. B., has given a full account from the *Chronica* of Sebastian Franck. But perhaps Erasmus ought to be regarded as expressing his disapproval of Savonarola's rebellious attitude towards the authorities of the Church. Such disapproval Colet is extremely likely to have shared with Erasmus.

[4] *Eras. Op.* III, 9.—The Epistle of Erasmus, to which Colet here referred, is that which Gaguin appended to his *Frankish History* in September, 1495. This fixes the date of Colet's residence at Paris.

of home-life, to his self-chosen task in the University of Oxford.[1]

It was at either the end of 1496 or the beginning of 1497 that Colet began to lecture upon the Bible at Oxford. We do not know at what College he stayed, or whether he resided, instead, in a Hall or Hostel. He probably did the latter, as it would have afforded him a greater degree of freedom. His own description of his place of abode is the simple one with which he concludes his first epistle to Erasmus: "Ex cubiculo Oxoniae" ("from my chamber at Oxford").[2]

Some knowledge of the position of the University of that time in regard to theological and biblical studies is requisite to the understanding of the full significance of that work upon which Colet was now entering. This will involve a brief narrative of a protracted and complicated struggle within the University itself which cannot be without some amount of interest for the modern student of the Bible and its history.

The conflict began as far back as the commencement of the fourteenth century. At Oxford, as at Paris, the mendicant orders had already established themselves. In both, they soon became obnoxious on several grounds. The Universities of Europe "were but the organs of the secular clergy at large."[3] The secular members, at first disposed to regard the new element with kindly goodwill, soon observed that there was a danger threatening the very life of the University in the possibility that the religious orders might obtain complete control of it. To avert this, the seculars passed a series of statutes aimed frankly at the regulars. The first hostile action against the friars in Oxford almost synchronized with a similar action in the University of Paris. This was the enactment of a statute

[1] *Ibid.*, 456B: "Jam reversus ex Italia, relictis parentum aedibus, Oxoniae maluit agere."

[2] *Ibid.*, 9C; Knight, *Colet*, p. 12; Lupton, *Colet*, p. 27.

[3] Rashdall, II, 384.

in 1252 requiring the obedience of the regular graduates to the University Statutes.[1] Disputes between the friars and the University continued at Oxford until the complete surrender of the former in A.D. 1320.

In one particular, at any rate, the victory thus obtained by the University, or rather the Faculty of Arts therein,[2] was scarcely just or beneficial. A theologian, in the ordinary course, could not proceed to Inception in Theology, *i.e.*, become a D.D., until he, as a first step, had graduated M.A. To this regulation the mendicants lodged the objection that their principles did not permit them to graduate in secular studies. The degree of Master of Arts represented in fact philosophical studies which the friars considered of little value for the practical work of preaching, but they imparted, or professed to do so, philosophical instruction in schools of their own. The second step towards the D.D. degree was to take the B.D. degree. That involved the delivery of lectures upon the Sentences, the famous text-book of mediæval theology. The regulars objected to this also, because it made philosophical education necessary, and, prior to 1311, they had been in possession of the privilege of requiring only the sanction of their superiors before lecturing upon the Bible. In short, the secular Masters and Doctors of Oxford had compelled, or sought to compel, the regulars to devote to the study of scholastic philosophy years which the friars wished to give to biblical study. These claimed that pure theology required no philosophical training. A friar, said they, might be well able to lecture upon the Bible, and yet be quite unsuited for the study of philosophy. It would appear, therefore, that the friars were anxious to place the exegetical study of the Bible in the place

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 378, for the Oxonian Statute ; *ibid.*, I, 373, for the Parisian.

[2] *Collectanea*, 2nd Series, edited by Prof. Montagu Burrows, M.A., Oxford, 1890, Introd., pp. 195 *et seq.* The document which sets forth the submission of the friars is given on pp. 272-3.

of prominence, in fact, to put the Bible before the Sentences.[1]

The sympathies of the modern biblical student go with the friars at this point in the dispute, and all the more readily when it is known that the mind of the secular academic, as may be seen from his course of study, was bound to take a philosophical turn which would exercise an important influence over his studies in theology, when he approached that higher Faculty. It will thus be obvious that the friars were the champions of biblical studies at Oxford University, whilst the secular Masters, who had gained a triumph, used their success to rivet firmly on the University that very scholastic philosophy which, in its later developments, inspired Erasmus and his reforming friends with contempt and disgust.

On the other hand, it is only fair to point out that the claim of the mendicants to be exempted from the Arts course constituted a threefold danger to the University. Firstly, the absence of any undertaking to be amenable to the University authorities rendered the friars independent of the Statutes. To rectify this, the Statute of 1252 sought to compel them to take an oath of allegiance to the University. Secondly, the multiplication of friar Doctors threatened to draw the major part of influence within the University into the hands of the mendicant orders. And thirdly, the licences granted to the friars by their Superiors to lecture on the Bible might conceivably be open to abuse.[2]

Although the regulars had submitted to the University, the conflict was not quite ended. At intervals it burst out again and again, but never assumed any degree of consequence. Besides, as the century advanced other issues arose within the University which gradually overshadowed and finally quenched the last sparks of the quarrel with the friars.

[1] Rashdall, II, 380. [2] Cp. Rashdall, II, 378-384 with Trevelyan (G. M.), *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, London, 1899, p. 297.

The University, almost immediately after it had obtained its success over the mendicants, gained another victory, one much more remarkable in its immediate effects. This had reference to the emancipation of the University of Oxford from episcopal control.

In two chief respects, the Bishops of Lincoln had, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the University commenced its organized existence, full power over it. One related to the Chancellor's jurisdiction, the other to his appointment.[1] From 1214 the Chancellor had been merely the Bishop's official. In all disputes, however, between the University and the Bishop, he invariably sided with the former, of which corporate body he was a member. At first, the Bishop had possessed the power of overruling the jurisdiction of the Chancellor, but, as time went on, the royal authority had conferred upon the Chancellor's Court a certain amount of independence, and besides the royal grants of privileges, the favour of the Metropolitan (of Canterbury) had, on several occasions, supported the rebellion of the University against the authority of the Bishop. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the growth of the Chancellor's independent jurisdiction had contributed very largely to render the University itself independent.[2]

The other circumstance, the appointment of the Chancellor, during the same time, tended in the same direction.

The usual course followed, in the thirteenth century, for the appointment of a Chancellor was, that the University elected or nominated a Doctor or Master of one of the superior Faculties to be Chancellor,[3] and the Chancellor-elect was required to present himself before the Bishop of Lincoln for confirmation of his

[1] Rashdall, II, 418 and 358-9. [2] *Ibid.*, II, 421-424.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 355. In 1300, Bp. Dalderby objected to the phrase "elected," and maintained that the University only "nominated" a person to the Chancellorship—see *ibid.*, II, 426.

appointment. Towards the end of this century, it came to be the custom for the newly-elected Chancellor to sue by proxy for confirmation. In the middle of the following century (the 14th), the University obtained a papal Bull recognizing the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury to confirm in case of the refusal of the Bishop of Lincoln to do so. But long before this, the nominal power of confirmation had become a final relic of episcopal control over the University, for, about the same time that the University won its triumph over the friars, it had asserted its independence of the Bishop by deposing the Chancellor.[1] As the institution was now destitute of all reality and value, the Bishop lost nothing when the Bull of Pope Urban V, in 1368, finally abolished the necessity of confirmation.

The University was free. With an elective head, chosen from and by themselves, one who had an independent jurisdiction over the members of the University, and to whom alone the members of the University felt themselves responsible, the academics of Oxford found themselves in a state of liberty unparalleled in that age. Whatever defects the study of scholastic philosophy, which they were now enforcing, entailed, it at least served the purpose of teaching men to think. The liberty enjoyed by the seculars of Oxford bestowed upon them the right to think freely. Accordingly, in the second half of the fourteenth century, Oxford became the home of that intellectual and religious movement known as Wycliffism.

In 1366, the request of the English Parliament that John Wycliffe should reply to the demands of the papal messenger for the payment by the nation of that tribute which the See of Rome claimed in virtue of King John's submission to Pope Innocent in 1213,[2] first brought

[1] To be accurate, in 1322.

[2] Green (J. R.), *History of the English People*, London, 1877-1880, I, 230-237. Hook (Dean W. F.), *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. IV (Middle Age Period), London, 1865, pp. 194, *et seq.*, has pointed

this remarkable person into prominence. Of the champion thus selected by Parliament the only certain facts relative to his life before 1366 are, that he was, in some sense, a royal chaplain;[1] that, in 1361, he had accepted the College living of Fillingham, in the diocese of Lincoln; and that he had, for a few years before 1361, been Master of Balliol College, Oxford.[2] There is no certainty in the alleged identification of the John Wycliffe who was appointed Warden of Canterbury Hall, in 1365, by Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, with the reformer.[3]

The peculiar opinions of Wycliffe, on the right of the State to take away ecclesiastical possessions, assumed importance for the first time only when he gave answer to the papal tax-gatherer. This person happened to be a monk—a fact that caused the parliamentary champion to add pungency to his reply. As a secular, Wycliffe was opposed to the regulars, the orders who held by no means the smallest share of the wealth of the Church. It was a time, indeed, when the Church was immensely rich, and, consequently, was concerned far more with the affairs of the world of profit and politics than with the spiritual life of the people. Whatever judgment may be passed upon the views of Wycliffe, there seems no doubt that, in effect, her riches constituted an evil destructive alike of the power of the State and of the influence of religion. On another occasion, he laid stress on the enormous amount of wealth that remained quite unproductive in the hands

out that, at this time, Wycliffe was but the spokesman of the prelates and barons of the kingdom in their opposition to papal usurpations, and that Wycliffe had in all his opinions, save the doctrinal, the sympathy and agreement of Primate Langham.

[1] Vaughan (Robert), *John de Wycliffe*, London, 1831, I, 298. "Peculiaris regis clericus talis qualis"—Sergeant (Lewis), *John Wyclif*, London, 1893, p. 104; Hook, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[2] Rashdall, II, 475; Sergeant, p. 95; Vaughan, I, 272.

[3] Rashdall, II, 498; Vaughan, I, 317-8 and Appendices; Sergeant, p. 147; Hook, IV, 197, note.

of abbots.[1] But it is worthy of note that Wycliffe, by his treatment of them, marked a distinction between monks and friars. The former, who consisted of the members of the ancient monastic orders, he condemned for their excessive opulence, yet he never censured the morality of their lives. He dealt otherwise with the friars, that is to say, the members of the four itinerant and mendicant orders founded towards the end of the middle ages, for he severely criticised their lives and methods. However, his acerbity has to be accounted partly as a recrudescence of academic opposition to the religious orders, and partly as a reflection of the, perhaps justifiable, hatred borne against the friars by the secular clergy and many of the people.

Rich as she was, the Church had little influence over the people. The bishops were princes, more familiar with politics and offices of State than with their own diocesan administration. The higher dignitaries were, in many cases, foreigners and absentees. The wealthier parishes were in the possession of monasteries or kings' favourites. As a consequence, the ordinary routine of parish work was left to a miserably educated, miserably paid, and miserably living multitude of vicars and curates. Therefore the riches of the Church were in the hands of those who did little to deserve their possession, and seemed best able to afford to have them reduced, namely, the superior clergy and heads of monasteries.

As a remedy for most of these evils, Wycliffe recommended the disendowment of the Church, and the adoption by the ministers of religion of the ideal of apostolic poverty.[2]

The next important event in his life took place in

[1] Consult Trevelyan's chapters on the "Social Position" and "Spiritual Influence of the Church in England," *Age of Wycliffe*, pp. 104-182.

[2] Trevelyan, p. 151. Curiously, at this juncture in his life, on account of his views on disendowment and apostolic poverty, Wycliffe found himself supported by the mendicant orders.

1377. Since 1366, his teaching had been found to be in direct antagonism to the received doctrines of the Church. The freedom of Oxford had encouraged and emboldened the great scholastic philosopher, for such Wycliffe indeed was,[1] to put no limit to the range of his speculations. At the stormy trial of Wycliffe, in the beginning of 1377, in St. Paul's, the quarrel of the presiding judge, Courtney, Bishop of London, with John of Gaunt and Lord Percy, prevented any formal statement of charges against Wycliffe. The trial, in fact, had degenerated into a riot.[2]

But towards the end of the same year, five Bulls came from Rome, one of which was addressed to the University of Oxford enjoining the cessation of the condemned teaching. Of the nineteen propositions set forth in the Bulls as heretical, ten refer to the temporal power or possessions of the Church, the other nine to the denial of the supremacy of the Pope, of the validity of his excommunications and censures, and of his claims to be superior to impeachment.[3]

The University, however, decided that, in substance, Wycliffe's statements were true ; and, being averse to the open rejection of the papal pronouncement, took the more prudent course of receiving the Bull and doing nothing in the matter.[4]

Archbishop Sudbury proceeded to remedy the defective action of the University authorities by citing Wycliffe before him at Lambeth in the early days of 1378. Being shielded by the protection of the Queen-Mother and the citizens of London, Wycliffe escaped from the hands of his judges with nothing worse than the imposi-

[1] Rashdall, II, 541.

[2] Sergeant, pp. 160-168 ; this is a most interesting portion of Mr. Sergeant's book, as it throws light upon the state and temper of London at the time.

[3] Vaughan, I, 368-396 (Gregory's Bull is in App. XI) ; Sergeant, pp. 177-179.

[4] Lechler (Prof.), *Wycliffe*, Eng. trans. by Prof. Lorimer, new edition, R.T.S., s.a., p. 171.

tion of silence. The death of Pope Gregory soon after delayed all further measures against him.

By 1382, Wycliffe's opinions had advanced to more profound questions of doctrine. These opinions had formed the subject of an inquiry at Oxford, in the preceding year, before the Chancellor of the University, William de Berton or Barton. Chancellor Barton's court had condemned them, and decided that they were not to be maintained or taught in Oxford, under severe penalties.[1] But Wycliffe had appealed to the King's Council, and though careful to abstain from public discussions on the subject, had asserted his arguments against Transubstantiation by means of writings. He had had a short period of quiet, whilst the authorities of the kingdom, civil and ecclesiastical, were sufficiently occupied in the suppression of the Peasants' Revolt. His enemies, as soon as they had time to pay attention to him, were not slow in imputing the responsibility for that insurrection to him. Yet there can be no doubt but that the Rising of 1381 was no product of new and startling doctrines, or of hastily conducted agitation.[2] The real causes of it were to be found in the conditions of life of the serfs and villeins, the loosening hold of the feudal lords over the wills and bodies of the labouring classes, and the economic circumstances of the nation generally.[3]

At length, in 1382, the revolt of the peasantry having been quelled, the question of Wycliffe's sacramental opinions formed the subject of discussion by a Synod held in London at the Blackfriars Priory. Courtney

[1] Sergeant, pp. 243-7; Vaughan, II, 61-62 and App. III.

[2] Lechler, pp. 374 *et seq.*; Sergeant, pp. 259-260 and 286; cp. also Sir John Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the adjoining countries*, translated by Thomas Johnes, 2nd edit., London, 1806, vol. V, chap. LVII; Trevelyan, p. 197.

[3] Green, I, 472-4. Cp. Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, 3rd series, London, 1877, "Annals of an English Abbey." The whole subject of the Rising and Wycliffe's relations to it is discussed by Trevelyan in an admirable chapter, Chap. VI.

presided. Ten bishops in all were present. Fifteen friar Doctors, a Benedictine Doctor, besides Law Doctors and Bachelors, and several Theological Bachelors, took part in the examination. It will be seen that, in this Synod, the members of which did not represent the full number of those summoned by Archbishop Courtney, the mendicant orders, Wycliffe's bitterest foes, constituted the majority. Ten Wycliffite opinions were condemned as heresies, fourteen as erroneous conclusions. Among the heresies were included Wycliffe's sacramental views, his ideas relative to temporal possessions in the hands of the clergy, his assertion that unworthiness affects the ministerial acts of an ecclesiastic, and his statement that an end ought to be put to the Papacy and that the regular orders fulfilled no useful purpose.[1] Courtney moreover appointed Stokes, a Carmelite friar, to see that heresy was banished from the Oxford schools.

In spite of the Archbishop's letter of command to the Chancellor, Robert Rygge,[2] the latter continued to show favour towards acknowledged supporters of Wycliffe's opinions, and appointed Dr. Hereford, a noted Wycliffite, to preach in St. Frideswyde's on the Festival of Corpus Christi. Hereford defended his leader's views on the Holy Eucharist as the orthodox doctrine of the Church. The sermon over, Chancellor Rygge waited for the preacher outside the church, and the two walked away together in the midst of the most important members of the University, chatting pleasantly, to the delight of the many Wycliffites present.

By his actions, Rygge was but expressing the will of the University. Such was his defence when, later on, he was compelled to apologize to Archbishop Courtney. Very possibly, many who supported Wycliffe's adherents at Oxford, at this juncture, did so less from actual sympathy with the reformer's religious opinions than

[1] Vaughan, II, chap. VIII, gives a full account of Wycliffe's teachings.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, App. IV.

from a desire to assert the University's independence of episcopal control. Among these we may perhaps count Chancellor Rygge himself.[1]

It has been pointed out that, in the University of Paris, at no time would the ideas of Wycliffe ever have found toleration, much less acceptance.[2] That is to be explained as arising from the difference between the circumstances and spirit of the two Universities. But more especially because the ecclesiastical authorities had direct control over the great French University, whereas Oxford had, for the time being, won a large measure of liberty.

Church and King now combined to stamp the heresy out of Oxford, and to curtail the independence of the proud University. Courtney, in November, 1382, with the bishops of his province, entered Oxford. At the Convocation thereupon held, Chancellor Rygge was brought to a more real submission, and the principal adherents of Wycliffe were forced to a recantation which, in the case of some, was only a pretence.

So far the Primate had succeeded in obtaining a triumph over the University, but Wycliffism was not yet banished from the Schools and Halls of Oxford. It was too intimately connected with the opposition of the seculars to the regulars, with the desire of the more earnest students of scholastic philosophy to have liberty of speculation, to render it possible that it should be stamped out so long as there remained a spark of freedom among the Doctors and Masters. Yet Courtney was confident that he had made an end of it by means of the repressive measures he had adopted in 1382, and by the watchfulness of his ready assistants, the mendicants, in the subsequent years. So secure did he feel against any recrudescence of danger from this quarter that he willingly lent his aid (in 1395) to procure the Bull of Boniface IX, exempting the University from the jurisdiction of all archbishops, bishops, and ordinaries,

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 83. [2] Rashdall, II, 428.

and placing under the jurisdiction of the Chancellor of Oxford all privileged persons, such as friars, monks, and certain others.[1] In the following year, however, Courtney's successor, Arundel, refused to regard the Bull as authentic, and proceeded to deal with some complaints that had been made to him as to the continued teaching of Wycliffite doctrine in the University. His efforts were by no means successful on this occasion.

At length, the final struggle between the University and the Archbishop began in 1408. The constitutions issued in this year against Wycliffite teaching were treated with neglect. Again, in 1409, the University declined to act against the heretics. In 1410, the attitude of the Great Congregation and the Regents to the Archbishop's wishes was more markedly hostile. Finally, in 1411, on the attempt of Arundel to enter Oxford for the purpose of holding a Visitation of the University in St. Mary's, the hostility of the University went so far as to present an armed resistance to this breach of the papal privilege. The Archbishop, with his retinue, retreated before the bows and arrows of the students, but he forthwith appealed to the King. Although the King demanded the resignation of the Chancellor and Proctors, the University regarded these forced resignations as subversive of their privileges, and thereupon decreed a cessation and re-elected the deprived officers. The courage of the University, in defending itself against King and Archbishop combined, only failed when Boniface's privilege was taken away by John XXIII towards the close of this eventful year.

The freedom of Oxford was at an end. Deserted by King, Pope, and even Parliament, the subjection of the University to the Archbishop was complete.

The campaign, which the University had prosecuted with so much vigour and so little success, in defence of Wycliffism, had been, in truth, much more a struggle to attain freedom of speech and thought in the pulpits

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 430.

and schools of Oxford. The times were not ripe for such freedom. Intellectual progress in England, and throughout Europe generally, was not yet sufficiently advanced for a claim of this kind to meet with sympathy or toleration. With the downfall of Wycliffism at Oxford, therefore, not only the religious zeal of the Lollard, but the intellectual activity of the Oxonian suffered a reverse which neither recovered from until both were merged into the great revolt of the succeeding century which strewed the quadrangle of New College with the torn leaves of Dunce—Duns Scotus.[1] Indeed, so entirely submissive did Oxford become during the first half of the fifteenth century, that, in 1479, Pope Sixtus was able, without any misgivings, to restore to the University the once valuable privilege of exemption from episcopal control.

After A.D. 1411, scholastic philosophy was carefully restricted to narrow channels of speculation. The subjects of disputation degenerated into low, and still lower, depths of triviality. Colet, when a student at Oxford, must have been at times as heartily weary of the inane discussions as Erasmus afterwards professed to be, when he ridiculed them in his *Praise of Folly*. The scholars of the Renaissance period looked back with regret to the scholasticism of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for that with which they were acquainted was only a decayed and lifeless representation of mediæval thought. Wycliffe, if the first of the reformers, must certainly be reckoned the last of the schoolmen, and the proscription of his works and doctrines in Oxford carried in it the death-warrant of all real power and originality in scholastic philosophy. Yet it is a matter of doubt if Wycliffism was ever banished from Oxford. True, it could never display itself openly. But the movement that urged Bohemia to demand religious freedom, and to revolt, when that freedom was denied, can hardly have been without

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 535. Dean Hook, *op. cit.*, IV, 493-6, gives a full account of the 1408-1411 struggle.

influence upon the minds of those who resorted to its place of origin. As late as 1491, the Bishop of Lincoln complained of being harassed at Oxford by numerous heretics, who, from the Bishop's remarks, appear to have been persons of some education and intelligence.[1] An under-current, therefore, of Wycliffite opinions actually existed in the University in Colet's time, and he may, likely enough, have become well acquainted with them there. Outside the University, Wycliffism undoubtedly had plenty of adherents, but these were rarely educated persons, and the views they held had little influence upon the state of the national mind.

Void of intellectual life as Oxford became in the fifteenth century, it had in it the germs of reviving activities. The establishment of libraries, the introduction of the art of printing, the diffusion of classical literature, and the production of improved Latin Grammars,[2] gave promise of a brighter future for the University; fraught with like tendencies were the increasing interest in educational matters outside the Universities, and the efforts made for the promotion of Grammar Schools throughout the country. The difficulty felt in Byngham's time (1439), and for long after, was not that parents were indifferent to the education of their children, but that suitable masters for the schools were not to be found.[3] That difficulty was still a real one when Erasmus, in 1511, sought among the graduates of Cambridge for an under-master for Colet's school at St. Paul's.[4]

More serious than the state of the literary side of the education of the Oxford student was that of the religious or theological side. Of the ordinary parish clergy, the vicars and curates of the country parishes, the

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 542-3. For the influence of Wycliffe at Cambridge see Dyer (G)., *Hist. of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, London, 1814, I, 163-4.

[2] Cp. Rashdall, II, 514-5, 464, with Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 16-19.

[3] Rashdall, II, 571; Lupton, *Colet*, p. 16.

[4] *Eras. Op.* III, 132F.

chantry-priests and chaplains, in short the inferior clergy as a whole, many may have been at one time or another at a University, but very few were the proud possessors of an Arts degree. Only the very highest class of the clergy were able to spend the long period of study (covering about sixteen years) required to take the theological degree. To be in possession of only an Arts degree meant that the student had no knowledge of theology beyond what he may have heard at a sermon.[1] Even the advanced theological student was only expected to hear certain lectures on the Bible delivered, in Paris University and very probably likewise in Oxford, by regulars. It is true that the candidate for the D.D. degree was required to lecture on one book of the Bible, but the title applied to this lecture, in the fifteenth century, would convey the impression that it had degenerated into a kind of imperfect "introduction," hardly a token of serious study.[2]

A consideration of these facts will serve to explain why Luther never saw a Bible until he was twenty years of age, when he at last obtained access to one in the convent at Erfurt. A Roman Catholic lady-writer speaks somewhat injudiciously of his state of ignorance when she puts the blame of it upon Luther himself: "If, therefore, in 1503, Luther had never seen a Bible, it must have been because he was so much engrossed in other things that he had never given himself the trouble of looking for one."[3] The truth of the matter is, that a man is not likely to look for that which has never been brought to his notice; and, in Luther's time, "a student in Arts would be as little likely to read the Bible as he would be to dip into Justinian or

[1] Rashdall, II, 701.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 453. The expressions used are "Introitus Biblie" and "lectura libri Sententiarum." Erasmus, in his *Enchiridion* (*Op.* V, 8D-F), declares his indignation against those who would pose as capable divines without making a study of the Scriptures.

[3] Stone (Miss J. M.), *Reformation and Renaissance*, London, 1904, p. 192.

Hippocrates."[1] Bibles were fairly plentiful in convents and monasteries, and in the hands of learned and wealthy persons. However, the secular cleric—if poor—had to be content with his course in Arts ; in other words, he had to leave the University, where he might possibly have found opportunity of picking up biblical knowledge, without any theological education to fit him for the performance of his parochial duties. The rich ones among the seculars most usually took up the study of Law as a surer road to preferment and honour.[2] In consequence, all serious study of Holy Writ fell into the hands of the mendicant orders. A realization of this fact serves not a little to explain why the friars were the most effective working clergy during the middle ages,[3] and how they acquired power and influence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It also accounts satisfactorily enough for the incident of Luther's coming upon the Bible only when he became an Augustinian. No one, indeed, can assert, with confidence of being able to produce adequate proof, that the mediæval Church deliberately withheld the Bible from the students at the Universities ; but it certainly does appear that the orders were in possession of nearly all the complete editions of the Scriptures. Too often these were buried in the libraries of the monasteries;[4] and, consequently, remained unknown, not merely to the students, but to the greater part of the theologians also. Under these circumstances, the faithful laity must have had an extremely meagre knowledge of Holy Writ.

From one point of view, therefore, all movements towards reform, whether Wycliffite, Hussite, or Catholic,

[1] Rashdall, II, 701.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 698-9. It is noted as a remarkable thing, and one which redounds to his honour, that Cardinal Wolsey, when a student at Oxford, studied, not Law, but Divinity—Taunton, *Wolsey*, p. 13.

[3] *Collectanea*, 2nd series, Oxford, 1890, pp. 197-201. See also Meray (Antony), *Les Libres Prêcheurs devanciers de Luther et de Rabelais*, Paris, 1860, Preface and Chap. III.

[4] Gairdner, *Lollardy*, I, 116.

ought to be regarded as movements on the part of the secular clergy to obtain the restoration to their own order of the means of rendering themselves capable of the full and efficient discharge of their duties. As a struggle between regulars and seculars, it was, in effect, an attempt on the part of the mendicants to retain that which gave them influence among the people, and an effort made by the parochial clergy to resume the full dignity of their pastorate.[1] Consequently, it is manifest that much depended upon which of these gained possession of the Bible and taught it.

[1] Rashdall, II, 700.

CHAPTER II

COLET'S BIBLE TEACHING AT OXFORD

COLET'S action in undertaking to deliver lectures on the Bible was, in some respects at least, outside, if not actually contrary to, the Statutes of the University. But perhaps the independence of the University had led to a certain degree of laxity of discipline in this matter as in so many others.[1] According to the regulations, Colet should have been in possession of a theological degree. So far was he from complying with these regulations that he did not desire his work to be mistaken for exercises performed towards the attainment of a degree in Theology. Nevertheless, two circumstances prove, that, whatever may have been the cause of the forbearance of the University authorities, he cannot well have lectured in defiance of them. One is that no censure would appear to have been passed upon him. The second is that important audiences gathered to hear his lectures, consisting of doctors of Theology and Law, abbots and dignitaries, besides the ordinary students.[2] The whole proceeding possessed an air of novelty that must have formed one of its attractions. Another reason for the abstinence of the University authorities from interference may have been that the lectures were delivered *gratis*, a circumstance which put them outside the University Statutes.

In the course he had taken Colet stood alone. There was no other lecturer teaching as he did. He treated

[1] Rashdall, II, 449-451. [2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 456c.

the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and, after it, the Epistle to the Romans (the two of which formed the subject of his first series of Lectures), in a manner unusual in his time. The customary method at Oxford was that known as *legere bibliam biblice*, whatever that may have signified. It has been explained as "reading chapter by chapter, with the accustomed glosses, and such interpretations as the reader could add."[1] This method probably differed very considerably from that in vogue with the theologians themselves. Theirs was the scholastic mode of interpretation, which consisted in selecting a text and treating it absolutely apart from its context, applying to it a multiplicity of senses. According to this manner of expounding Holy Scripture there was more philosophical ingenuity shown by the theologians than actual knowledge of theology.[2] Tyndale, some years later than Colet's period of lecturing, relates, in his "Practice of Prelates," the fashion of scholastic interpretation and the causes of this particular method. His words lose none of their accuracy by being frank and expressive :—

> In the Universities they have ordained that no man shall look on the Scripture until he be noselled in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the Scripture. . . . And then when they be admitted to study Divinity, because the Scripture is locked up with such false expositions and with false principles of natural philosophy that they cannot

[1] *Observations on the Statutes of the University of Cambridge*, by George Peacock, D.D., Dean of Ely, App. A., p. XLVI, Note 1. It may have been a method similar to that of Dionysius Carthusianus, to whose commentaries Colet's fragmentary exposition of the Ep. to the Romans bears some resemblance. Notice, for example, the likeness in style between *In Epi. Pauli ad Roma. Enarra., Fol. XI, Explanatio cap. quarti (D. Dionysii Carthusiani in omn. beati Pauli epistolas commentaria.* Coloniae, Anno 1538) and Lupton, *Colet's Letters to Radulphus*, etc., London, 1876, pp. 247, 251-2.

[2] Even Erasmus was accustomed to use the scholastic system of manifold senses, Lupton, *Colet*, p. 104.

> enter in, they go about the outside and dispute all their lives about words and vain opinions, pertaining as much unto the healing of a man's heel as health of his soul.[1]

Colet may have, at times, found it either suitable or advisable to follow a system of exposition similar to that of Dionysius Carthusianus, because it was an already existing method against which he had no objection save that it lacked explicitness. But he made no attempt whatever to imitate the scholastic mode then so prevalent in the University. Indeed, the whole nature of the man was averse to that diffuse inane juggling with words and senses, because in it he could not see any practical utility. The great desire of Colet, the principal aim of his labours, was to present the Holy Scriptures, not as an arsenal of arguments, but as the revelation of divine truths that bore direct relation to the lives and the beliefs of men. Yet, from the time of St. Augustine, the fourfold interpretation of Scripture had dominated the middle ages. An ancient couplet concisely explained the system :—

> Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
> Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.

Against it Nicolas of Lyra, a Franciscan, had revolted long before Colet, and had maintained that "the mystical explanation which departs from the literal sense, ought to be deemed of no value," and that "it is from the literal sense only, and not from the mystical, that a proof in discussion can be drawn."[2]

Colet uttered a similar thought in a letter to Erasmus.[3] Nevertheless, when he declared his views regarding the scholastic method of fourfold interpre-

[1] *Expositions and Notes*, etc., by William Tyndale, Parker Society Pub. 1849, p. 291.

[2] Berger (S.), *La Bible au Seizième Siècle* (Étude sur les origines de la critique biblique), Paris, 1879, pp. 25-27.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, V, 1291D, E.

tation, he admitted the possibility of a figurative sense accompanying the literal.[1]

What he thus expressed as an opinion he illustrated in the lectures that attracted such a number of Oxford doctors and students. In them he lent a wholly new charm to the exposition of the Pauline Epistles. He brought into clearness the course of the Apostle's thoughts, and narrated the events of St. Paul's life, together with the circumstances that preceded and followed the occasion upon which each Epistle was written. Consequently, his work was biographical and historical as well as exegetical. He loved to bring out the traits of the Apostle's character, drawing, indeed, his lines and lineaments from the particulars which St. Paul himself supplied in his utterances as an inspired teacher. At another time, he would direct attention to St. Paul's words of advice, and would do this with a carefulness which suggested that he had in mind some of the circumstances of the Church at the time of this lecturing; as, for instance, when he pointed out the prudent counsel given by the Apostle to the Christians of the early Church that they should observe the precept of Christ, and "render to Cæsar (albeit a tyrant and an oppressor) the things that are Cæsar's."[2]

Indeed, Colet's eager desire for the reform of religion, and what he thought about the blemishes of the Church of his day, betrayed themselves a little further on, when he referred to the spirit of covetousness so common among the priesthood, in words that echo to some extent the opinions of Wycliffe on ecclesiastical possessions. And these ideas he expressed much more forcibly and freely in his private expositions.[3]

[1] Lupton, *Colet's Two Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius the Areopagite*, London, 1869, pp. 106-7.

[2] Lupton, *Colet's Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*, London, 1873, pp. 89-98.

[3] Consult his private exposition of Romans v, given in Lupton's edition of *Colet's Letters to Radulphus*, p. 163.

His lectures will therefore be observed to have differed profoundly from those with which the Oxford doctors were familiar. The latter, being unacquainted with the commentaries of the early Fathers, and drawing most of their theology from Duns Scotus, looked upon the lectures as altogether new. His friends understood better, for they bestowed upon him the descriptive title of "Champion and Supporter of the Old Theology."[1] But, when a censure is being passed on the puerilities of theological disputations in Oxford at this period, it were well to recollect that the University had been forcibly limited in the range of the discussions it could sanction; and that if Colet's lectures were outside that range, they had not received (and perhaps could not have been accorded) any official approval or recognition. And, whilst we deplore the intellectual powers wasted upon jejune arguments drawn from Duns Scotus, which would have been much better employed in the study of Holy Scripture, we must be careful not to underestimate the value of the works themselves of that eminent schoolman.[2]

Colet's eagerness to aid a reform of religion by originating a reconstitution of the religious principles of the audiences he attracted to his lectures was crowned with success, at least so far as to win for himself a place in their regard, which gave weight to his counsels and enabled him to exercise a subtle influence upon his generation. He spoke with such evident sincerity, such candour and modesty, as to gain confidence and reverence, though still a young man. But Colet was old beyond his thirty odd years of life. The premature death of all his brothers and sisters may have had something to do with this, or there was naturally a vein of austerity in his disposition. However it arose, the fact was early recognized by all who met him that Colet was a man of unusual gravity and seriousness.

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 42.
[2] Gairdner, *Lollardy*, etc., I, 288.

Thus, Colet became at Oxford the centre of a movement the presence of which was marked by inquiry and study of the Scriptures. Lecturing was only one mode by which he laboured for this cause. At one time, he made an abstract of the *Hierarchies of Dionysius*, the pseudo-Areopagite, for a deeply pious friend. At another, he wrote *Letters to Radulphus* (probably Ralph Collingwood, afterwards Dean of Lichfield) on the Mosaic account of the Creation. At still another time, he indited for one who was, in all likelihood, a young relative of his, that incomplete exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, to which allusion has been already made. Moreover, those who heard him lecture in public often consulted him in private.[1]

These notices of Colet's labours by no means account for the seven years or so that he spent at Oxford, but they afford plenty of room for inference as to the manner in which he was engaged during the whole time. By public lecture, by friendly disputation, by conversation in private, and by personal letter, he carried on the work of promoting biblical studies for the purpose of effecting religious reforms. The ceaseless energy of Colet in this enterprise appears from time to time in the correspondence of the great humanist, Erasmus.

When Colet was on his way home from his travels in Italy and France, he found amongst the scholars in Paris one named Erasmus. The Dutch scholar was already a man of note.[2] He and Colet, destined to become intimate friends in subsequent years, did not, however, meet at this time. The commendatory epistle written by Erasmus to Gaguin regarding his *History of France* was the means by which Colet recognized the power of the young humanist. This epistle is noteworthy as having been the first work of Erasmus

[1] Cp. the first of six epistles of Colet given in App. to Knight, *Life of Colet*, and Lupton, *Colet*, p. 90.

[2] For some brief particulars as to the early life of Erasmus, before the beginnings of his friendship with Colet, see App. I.

that was printed, for Gaguin appended it to his *History*.[1] In that place, contrasting its polished eloquence with the rougher style of the book it praises, it was bound to confer honour upon its author and arrest attention. Colet, amongst others, remarked it, and remembered the writer when, about four years later, he came to England.

In the period that intervened between Colet's perusal of this epistle and the visit of Erasmus to England, the latter had spent most of his time at Paris, varied with occasional visits to Holland, Cambrai, and Brabant. At Paris, Erasmus followed the profession of a teacher of rhetoric, and as such became in 1496 an inmate of the English boarding-house. Here he had several pupils of noble rank, young Lord Mountjoy, Thomas Grey, and Robert Fisher, cousin of the John Fisher who was afterwards Bishop of Rochester and a frequent correspondent with Erasmus. In the following year, having quarrelled with the tutor of the boarding-house, Erasmus left that abode.[2] Lord Mountjoy had now departed into England to be married to a daughter of Sir William Say, but he returned, in the earlier part of 1498, to Paris in order to continue his studies, being still a minor. He once more became a pupil of Erasmus. After nearly a year, Erasmus went to Tournehem Castle to improve his acquaintance with the Princess of Veer and to accept tokens of her patronage.[3] Whilst there he received an invitation to become an inmate of the English nobleman's household, a suggestion to which he did not at once accede. However, on his return to Paris, he appears to have taken up his residence with Lord Mountjoy, an arrangement of which he expresses his satisfaction to his friend Batt.[4]

[1] It is to be found in *Eras. Op.*, III, 1817, entitled "Erasmus Rot. Roberto Gaguino, viro undecunque doctissimo."

[2] Drummond (R. B.), *Erasmus*, London, 1873, I, 38-40.

[3] See App. I for some information as to the Princess of Veer, and Tournehem.

[4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 47F.

At this juncture, Erasmus was looking forward to a journey into Italy to obtain the doctorate of Divinity in that home of learning. Whilst gathering the funds for this object, and hoping against hope that perhaps Mountjoy might travel thither and take him as a companion, he occupied himself with the production of little treatises. Supplies failing and with them his hopes of the Italian journey,[1] he accompanied his pupil to England in the summer of 1499 and lodged in the house of Lord Mountjoy's father-in-law, Sir William Say. Here, it seems, that Erasmus first met Thomas More. It was in every respect a memorable meeting.[2]

Erasmus, though disappointed in his expectations of an Italian journey, had looked forward with some degree of pleasure to his English trip. When he had come to England, his impressions of the country and the people were even pleasanter than he had anticipated, and he wrote to his friend Faustus saying how charmed he was. He advised Faustus also to come over and enjoy the blessings of England, and concluded his letter with an amusing sketch of the simplicity and freedom of English customs.[3] Erasmus himself was about to return to Paris, but was prevented by the stringent measures adopted by the government against any person leaving the kingdom, in consequence of the flight of Edmund de la Pole.[4] It was a time of great political commotion in the country. Perkin Warbeck went from prison to execution in the autumn of this year. The unfortunate Earl of Warwick, the next heir male of the Yorkist line, rapidly followed the impostor to the same fate. The Earl of Suffolk, whose father had,

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 22E ; Nichols, I, 199.

[2] Drummond, I, 69 ; Seebohm, p. 113.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 56D,E ; Nichols, I, 203 ; Nisard (D.), *Études sur la Renaissance*, Paris, 1855 p. 31 ; Froude (J. A.), *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, London, 1894, p. 49.

[4] See *Paston Letters* (edited by Gairdner), VI, No. 1065, a letter from the Earl of Oxford to Sir John Paston, dated 20th August, 1499, containing instructions to watch the coast.

only four years before, resigned his duchy in Parliament, had been suspected of treason and had fled overseas on 1st July.[1] His flight disturbed King Henry VII exceedingly, as he was a nephew of King Edward IV; and besides, his brother, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, who had espoused the cause of Lambert Simnel and had fallen in the Battle of Stoke, had been previously recognized by Richard III as his heir, when that king's own son had died.[2]

Not desiring to linger amongst the uncongenial courtiers in London, Erasmus went down to Oxford with the hope of advancing his studies in the Greek language. At that time the University contained several noted scholars deeply versed in Greek who had acquired that language in Italy. It is quite possible that Grocyn, Linacre, and Latimer were there together.[3]

The Canons Regular of the Augustinian order had, between sixty and seventy years previously, obtained a College, named St. Mary's, at Oxford, the site of which is now occupied by Frewen Hall. Some of the ruins of St. Mary's College still exist in New Inn Hall Street.[4] The Augustinian was Erasmus's own order, and naturally when he went down to the University he took up his residence at that College rather than in a hospice. For, unlike Colet, who had come to Oxford as a teacher three years before, he came to learn. The freedom which Colet required was not necessary to Erasmus.

Of the Prior of St. Mary's, Richard Charnock, there

[1] Nichols, I, 222; Hume (David), *History of England*, London, 1796, III, 383.

[2] Green, II, 76-77, thinks Henry was desirous of removing all rival claimants to the crown, in view of the Spanish match for Prince Arthur.

[3] Nichols, I, 204, doubts if there were any of them in residence at this time, and also, I, 224, if Erasmus studied Greek at all at Oxford. But Erasmus himself distinctly states he began his Greek studies there, I, 233, 236; cp. also Drummond, I, 68, 69. Wolsey was then bursar of Magdalen.

[4] Rashdall, II, 479.

are several appreciative notices to be found in the letters of Erasmus. Sixtin, writing to Erasmus, calls Charnock "humanissimus." Erasmus himself, writing to Mountjoy, speaks of the kindly disposition of the Prior, and again, in his long and interesting epistle to Sixtin, terms Charnock, "the high-priest of the Graces," "a man in whom learning is combined with the greatest gentleness and probity."[1] A particularly sweet and attractive character appears to have been that of the ruler of this College, of which Erasmus now found himself an inmate. Perhaps the warmth of Erasmus's appreciation may have gained no little increase from the violent contrast the English prior presented to the ruler of that only other College wherein Erasmus had so far ever resided—Standonée, or Standonck, of the College of Montaigu in Paris. Of this latter College, it would be difficult to say whether Erasmus hated most the austerity of its governor, the vileness of its dietary, or the futility of its Scotistic theology.[2] We may assume, indeed, that the humanist's own estimate of the persons he met on his first visit to Oxford is that which we find in a letter written by Batt, his intimate friend and correspondent, to Mountjoy, wherein Charnock's greatest characteristic is termed "humanitas," Colet's "eruditio," and Thomas More's "suavitas."[3]

Charnock was an admirer and friend of Colet, between whom and himself there must have been many points of affinity in disposition. Through him Colet

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 42D: "ille Charitum antistes"; and 42E: "Prior, homo (ita me Deus amet) non minus mirabili mixtura, ex omnium literarum generibus omnibus, quam ex summa humanitate, summaque item integritate conflatus."

[2] Nisard, pp. 19-20, quotes Rabelais' condemnation of the rigorous life in the Collège de Montaigu. It is worthy of note that, later on, Calvin received some portion of his education at this same College—see Beza's *Life of Calvin*, in *Calvin's Tracts*, trans. by Beveridge, Edinburgh (Calv. Trans. Society), 1844.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 55D.

appears to have learnt of Erasmus's arrival at Oxford and sent to the rising scholar a letter, in which "the touch of Puritan sincerity" marks a strong feature in the temperament of the writer. His friend Brumus,[1] he said, had commended Erasmus to him in a letter, but Erasmus was already known to him. He had read in Paris an epistle addressed to Gaguin which had revealed to him the erudition of the Dutch scholar, whom he now welcomed to England. He professed himself ready to assist Erasmus in any way possible.[2]

Erasmus sent an immediate reply,[3] one of greater length and bearing a strong contrast to the plain, unartificial epistle of Colet. The elaborate style and somewhat fulsome adulation Erasmus displays in his letter is however pardonable on the supposition that, in this respect, he merely followed the ordinary standard of rhetoric to which he was accustomed. Coming from a teacher of Rhetoric, such as Erasmus professed to be, touches of this kind were perfectly consistent with sincerity. And indeed, in an epistle to Lord Mountjoy, shortly afterwards Erasmus declared his entire happiness under the kindly offices of Charnock and Colet.[4] The adulatory criticism of Colet's style, however, which he wrote to the future Dean, misled one biographer of Colet into the supposition that the Dutch scholar had

[1] Allen, I, 242, suggests that Brumus stands for Grocyn. He says that palæographically the name may be so read.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 9. The dates given in the Leyden edition to this ep. and Erasmus's reply (apparently on the authority of the *Opus Epistolarum* of 1529) were respectively 1497 and 1498. Neither Du Pin (Ellies), *History of Ecclesiastical Writers*, Eng. trans., Dublin, 1723, III, 288, nor Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, made the slightest effort to fix the chronology of Erasmus's epistles. Seebohm, Drummond, and Lupton attempted to do it, in some cases with conspicuous success. Two scholars of distinction, Mr. Nichols and Mr. Allen, have recently published works on this subject which contain the results of serious endeavours to solve a difficult problem. In the present treatise I have gratefully availed myself of their findings.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 39-40.

[4] *Ibid.*, 41A.

attended some of the lectures on the Pauline Epistles before the two had been introduced to each other.[1] This has been shown to be an unnecessary, if not an actually false assumption.[2]

The fact is, Erasmus was indulging in a little well-meant flattery, and founded his criticism of Colet's character and style upon all the good things that Charnock had, in all probability, told him concerning Colet, and upon the concise, unaffected letter that person had sent him. Complimentary epistles and poems of that date were almost expected to contain a large amount of flattery. During his career Erasmus frequently adopted, for what were in his eyes worthy objects, this common mode of correspondence, and sometimes became even fulsome in his flatteries, as much to his own disgust as to that of his best friends. But he never reached the height (or depth) of obsequious adulation that the Italian writers, Navagero and Castiglione, attained a few years later, when Pope Julius II was described by one of them as " novus ex alto demissus Olympo Deus," and by the other as " Quem Deus ipse Erebi fecit Coelique potentem ut nutu pateant utraque regna tuo."[3] Alongside expressions of this kind the words of praise which Erasmus addressed to Colet seem very mild. Indeed it is perhaps fair to assume that Erasmus made use of polished and laudatory phrases to ingratiate himself with one whose reputed character he admired, and whose friendship he hoped would prove agreeable and profitable. Underneath all the polish, however, lay a real appreciation of Colet, so far as Erasmus knew him ; and it is worthy of note, that the subsequent correspondence which passed between them displays the high esteem they came early to entertain for each other. All merely flattering ex-

[1] Seebohm, p. 33.

[2] Lupton, *Colet*, p. 99 ; Nichols, I, 208.

[3] Symonds (J. A.), *Renaissance in Italy : Revival of Learning in Italy*, London, 1882, pp. 493-4.

pressions disappear from Erasmus's epistles to Colet, and, as one reads their letters, one cannot but feel the ring of sincerity and courtesy in any compliments they exchange.

A common friendship drew together at Oxford a small body of theologians remarkable for their erudition and estimable qualities. It may be imagined, though it cannot be proved of all of them, that their attitude towards the dominant theological system in the University was not that of entire satisfaction. Colet formed the centre of the little band, and those who gathered around him may be considered as admirers of and sympathizers with his work at Oxford. In such a company Erasmus occupied the place of a free-lance, a humanist, a " poet," rather than that of a theologian. In an epistle to Sixtin, a Frisian who had graduated at Siena and was now practising in the ecclesiastical courts of England as a lawyer, Erasmus has preserved to all generation a glimpse of a University dinner-party in the last year but one of the fifteenth century, and at the same time has afforded us some interesting particulars regarding certain traits of Colet's character.[1] Having mentioned the more important guests, Erasmus continued :—

> There had been some discussion on several points, when a fierce battle began upon this one. Colet said that Cain had first offended in this fault, that, as if in distrust of the goodness of the Creator and in too great reliance upon his own labours, he was the first to plough, whilst Abel, satisfied with what came of its own accord,[2] fed sheep. We opposed him, each of us on our own account, the divine with logical, I with rhetorical, arguments. Even Hercules is no match for two, the Greeks say. But our friend overcame all. He seemed impelled by a sacred fervour, and endowed with almost superhuman exaltation and

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 42-43. Allen, I, 268, suggests that Wolsey may have been a guest at this convivial gathering.

[2] " Sponte nascentibus contentus."

> majesty. His voice was altered, his eyes took on another kind of glance, his face and appearance seemed different and greater, and he was for the time being inspired.[1]

But this serious turn to the conversation did not commend itself to Erasmus, who thereupon invented a quaint story of the means by which Cain cheated the angel that was guarding Eden and thus drew the wrath of God upon himself.

On this and sundry other occasions, when Erasmus and Colet came into conflict on questions of biblical interpretation, the difference of their minds became very noticeable. It was not only at the convivial gathering, but throughout his stay at Oxford, during his first visit to England, that Erasmus displayed an unsettled mind upon theological matters. He was indeed not at all kindly disposed to the study of theology, and purposely avoided running counter to prevalent theological notions, lest he should be termed a heretic.[2] In this respect he exhibited the usual attitude of humanists of that period towards the condition of Christian teaching. However much they disbelieved in Christianity itself, they were careful not to promulgate opinions contrary to the accepted doctrines of the Church.[3]

Yet Colet was exercising a powerful, if friendly, influence over Erasmus as regarded theological questions. It is true that, in acuteness and versatility, the Dutch humanist was the superior; but Colet had the fixity of purpose and thought which the other lacked. The sincerity, the single-mindedness, the austere rectitude, the purity in word and action, of the Englishman made a life-long impression on Erasmus,

[1] "Aliud sonabat vox, aliud tuebantur oculi, alius vultus, alius adspectus, majorque videri, afflatus est numine quando."

[2] Consult *Vita Erasmi* in *Eras. Op.*, I; Seebohm, p. 106.

[3] A remarkable exception was that of Laurentius Valla—see Symonds, pp. 259-263.

which he fittingly acknowledged in the sketch that he made of Colet's life for Justus Jonas in 1519.[1] Although the effect of Colet's influence upon him was not outwardly very manifest, it was none the less real on that account; Colet caused him to think seriously and profoundly upon subjects that had not hitherto formed an important part of his thoughts or studies, with results that have left their mark upon modern thought. Too much emphasis, therefore, can hardly be laid on the indications of Colet's influence over the mind of Erasmus.

Between the two there were many friendly meetings, apparently at the residence of the Englishman, at which grave discussions took place. The vehemence and resolution of Colet's character would often overcome the calmer, more profound, but less definite, judgment of Erasmus; and the humanist, on returning to his lodging, customarily recapitulated the whole discussion for his own satisfaction. Sometimes this exercise produced a determination to look still further into authorities on the subject, and sometimes a frank admission of the substantial accuracy of Colet's position.

One of these debates related to our Lord's agony in Gethsemane, a subject that not only gave rise to several oral discussions between them, but also originated long argumentative epistles. So deeply did Erasmus meditate upon it that it occupied his thoughts for several years, and he finally published a treatise *De Taedio et Pavore Christi*, about the time of Colet's appointment to the deanery of St. Paul's. But, during this first residence at Oxford, Erasmus composed

[1] ". . . . de procellis, quibus explorata est hominis ingenua pietas cujus minimam portionem debebat naturae suae. Siquidem animo praeditus erat insigniter excelso, et omnis injuriae impatientissimo . . . adversus haec ita pugnavit philosophia, sacrisque studiis, vigiliis, jejuniis, ac precibus, ut totum vitae cursum ab hujus seculi inquinamentis purum peregerit."—*Eras. Op.*, III, 458A.

a long epistle to Colet,[1] in which he restated the grounds of his opinions. To this letter Colet replied in a *Responsio ad argumenta Erasmiana, De taedio et pavore Christi*.[2] It is certain that the wordy warfare proceeded further, because a rejoinder of Erasmus to Colet's *Responsio* is extant, and has been lately published for the first time.[3]

Several conflicts of the above type probably took place, though perhaps they were not so voluminous or profound. The debates served one great purpose if no other, namely, that they caused the two friends to entertain an increased esteem for each other. Whether these many conversations and exchanges of correspondence are to be regarded as the origin or source of the idea which Colet now began to cherish, in respect of Erasmus's settlement in England, cannot be ascertained, but there is fair room for surmise. When introducing himself to the Dutch scholar he had indulged the hope that the latter would put his talents at the service of the English nation. His further acquaintance with the brilliant young foreigner raised his expectations still higher. The winter was advancing, and Erasmus had now been a few months at Oxford, yet he had given no token of an intention to take up work at the University or in London. Colet, therefore, reproached him for not doing so. Probably Erasmus made some mention of his desire to return to Paris, and thereupon Colet replied in censures that exhibited his own disappointment at his new friend's resolve to depart from the University. This, however, rests on deductions made from an epistle of Erasmus's; none of Colet's on this matter are extant, and of Eras-

[1] In *Eras. Op.*, III, 1792B-D, this ep. is given as if complete in itself; in *Op.*, V, 1265A-D, it appears more naturally as merely the first paragraph of the long epistolary treatise *De Taedio*, etc. Allen, I, 249-253, dates the latter ep. October, 1499, and adds a second part from the Gouda MS., 1324, fo. 159.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, V, 1291-2.

[3] Allen, I, 254-260, prints it from the Gouda MS., 1324, fo. 153.

mus's only that one in which he answered the reproaches of Colet on his refusal to share in the noble work of biblical exposition.

Probably there was a lack of reasonableness in Colet's endeavours to attach Erasmus to his favourite scheme. The latter had his own plans for himself ; besides, the kind of labour to which he was being urged differed widely from that upon which his mind had been long fixed, it involved possible dangers, it demanded exceptional qualifications, it needed a particularly enthusiastic spirit for its execution. Erasmus felt in no wise suited for it. On the other hand, it has to be remembered that Colet's position was one of extreme difficulty. He stood, in fact, alone. His need of a sympathetic colleague was apparent to himself. Perhaps too, he perceived the advantage of having someone who would be able to extend the field of operation, and continue the movement he had initiated at the University, in the event of his own removal. The idea that Erasmus would prove a suitable assistant and successor came to him quite naturally.

Although the humanist was reluctant to pain so dear a friend as Colet had become to him, he continued unshaken. Kind words and remonstrances were alike ineffectual to turn him from his purpose. But he wrote to Colet an epistle[1] every phrase of which was designedly conciliatory, whilst it set forth with clearness his long-settled determination. The letter is one that possesses quite an unusual value, since, though written with another object in view, and though it is free from caricature and sarcasm, it renders an exact account of the puerilities of the " theologasters " and the worthlessness of the prevalent theology :—

> . . . Thou sayest that thou dost dislike the modern kind of theologians, who grow old in vain subtleties and sophistical quibblings. Thou art in strong agreement with myself, friend Colet. Not that I condemn

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1789-1791 ; V, 1263-4.

their studies, for I would not wish anyone to cease from study altogether; but, when these studies are isolated and not based on any fairly ancient or choice literature, they appear to me such as are calculated to render a man a sciolist and a contentious fellow; whether they are likely to make a man wise let others see for themselves. These men are wasting their intellects in dry and barren sentences. . . .[1]

Since thou, Colet, hast undertaken to do battle with this impregnable class of men for the restoration, as far as thou art able, of the old and true Theology to its pristine grace and dignity, thou hast entered, believe me, upon a sphere of labour in many respects most admirable—as regards Theology herself most pious, for all studies and for this flourishing University of Oxford most wholesome, but, to speak the truth, full of trouble and ill-will. No doubt, among theologians themselves there are not a few who are willing and able to aid thy honourable endeavours. . . . I am amazed, however, not at thy taking on thy shoulders such a burden, to which thou art equal, but at thy inviting me, a person of no importance, to partnership in so noble an office. For thou dost exhort me, yea, thou dost almost reproachfully demand, that, as thou art expounding Paul, so likewise I should expound the ancient Moses or the eloquent Isaiah, and, as thou sayest, try to kindle the decaying studies[2] of this University during the winter months. But I, who have learnt to dwell alone, know well that my equipment is defective, and I do not claim so much learning as is necessary for such a task, nor do I think I have strength of mind sufficient to endure

[1] Cf. *ibid.*, III, 1790B: "Sic priscorum ingeniis expeditam (Theologiam), spinis quibusdam impediunt, involventes omnia, dum omnia conantur resolvere, quemadmodum ipsi loquuntur."

[2] "Frigentia studia." That there was more than mere figure of speech in such a term may be seen in the section on "Hardships of Student Life," in Rashdall's *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. II, part II, p. 665: "In France and England we hear nothing of fires in the School and there are very slight traces of them in College chambers . . . there was no warmth but what was supplied by the straw or rushes upon the floor."

the ill-will of so many men resolutely looking after their own interests. That work demands, not a novice, but a most skilful general. . . .

Still, so far am I from desiring to resist thy delightful and holy labours, that (since I am not yet a fit assistant) I will promise to be an earnest encourager and promoter of them; and when I become aware that I possess the requisite strength and abilities I will myself take my stand on thy side, and devote, if not highly valuable, at least earnest labour to the restoration of Theology.[1]

Meanwhile, nothing can be more delightful to me than to discuss, as we have begun, the Holy Scriptures daily with one another, either in conversation or by letter.

Farewell, my Colet. The courteous prelate, Richard Charnock, my host and our common friend, has bidden me to greet thee heartily in his name.

Oxford, from the College of the Canons of the Order of St. Augustine, commonly called St. Mary's.

Very soon after the despatch of this epistle, that is, in January, 1500, Erasmus left England. He had been altogether only a few months in this country, and, during that time, his most serious undertaking had been the compilation of the *Adages*.[2] During the intervals between the periods of friendly intercourse and this work, he may have exercised himself in the study of the Greek language, but on this point nothing very certain can be ascertained.[3]

One thing seems clear. The influence of Colet upon Erasmus was permanent in its effects. Mr. Seebohm has drawn attention to that influence and has hardly exaggerated its extent.[4] We may even assume that

[1] Within a year afterwards, Erasmus was eagerly working at his Greek studies for the purpose of devoting himself entirely to the study of sacred literature.—*Eras. Op.*, III, 60A; cf. *ibid.*, 85B.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, II, 5; Nichols, I, 243.

[3] Drummond, I, 81. Cp., however, Nichols, I, 224, 270, 283.

[4] *Oxf. Ref.*, pp. 102-112. Nichols, I, 224, thinks that this influence has been probably exaggerated. But recently, Allen, II, 182, has produced additional evidence for the substantial accuracy of Seebohm's assertions.

the publication of the *Novum Instrumentum*, with its Annotations, is to be regarded as a late result of the promise made by the humanist to Colet. Perhaps a similar inference is to be drawn from the publication of the epistle containing the promise as a prefix to the treatise *De Taedio et Pavore*, etc., to which it can bear no other relation. In another place Erasmus acknowledges[1] that it was Colet's indignant denunciation of Aquinas which set him upon a more thorough examination of that schoolman's writings, with the result that he came to share in his English friend's contempt. Of course it may be doubted if this incident occurred during the first visit of Erasmus to England. Such instances, however, do not reveal so clearly the extent of the impression Colet made on the mind of the humanist, in their first short period of intercourse, as do the words of the next letter he wrote to Colet, after some years had passed, and the frequent recurrence in their later correspondence to opinions which were first broached in the winter of 1499.[2]

Before his departure from England, Erasmus wrote a hasty letter on 5th December to Robert Fisher, who was in Italy, declaring that only for Lord Mountjoy's carrying him off to England, he would have been in Italy by this time. He informed Fisher that he was pleased with England, as regarded both climate and people. Erudition profound and ancient he had met with in England to such a degree that, except for the sake of seeing Italy, he had no great desire to travel

[1] Ep. to Jod. Jonas, *Eras. Op.*, III, 458E. Erasmus had already come to entertain the greatest contempt for the Scotistic theology.— *Ibid.*, III, 76, ep. to Thomas Grey, dated by Nichols, I, (4), as "Paris, end of 1497," and by Allen, I, 190, as "August 1497."

[2] Towards the close of Colet's life a letter was addressed to him by Marquard von Hatstein, in which the writer says that Erasmus had proclaimed to all the world the praises of England and Colet, and, adds Hatstein, "I fancy that each of you owes much to the other, but which of the two owes most I am doubtful."— *Apologia Erasmi Rot. . . .* Bas. ap. Io. Frobenium, An. MDXX., pp. 139-40. See App. II.

thither. Then follow little notices of the principal persons whose acquaintance he had made :—

> I seem to hear Plato himself when I listen to my Colet. Who does not wonder at the perfection of Grocyn's knowledge? What is there more acute, sounder, and finer than the judgment of Linacre? What has Nature ever devised more agreeable, pleasant, or felicitous than Thomas More's talents? But why should I go through the remainder of the list? The harvest of ancient erudition is here wonderfully extensive and plenteous, wherefore thou oughtest to return the quicker.[1]

Erasmus did not, however, get out of England as pleasantly as he desired. There was at that time a law of King Edward III directed against the removal of coin from the realm of England, and Henry VII had re-enacted this law. Erasmus had accordingly changed the money he possessed into foreign coin, in the belief that the law only referred to English coin. Both More and Mountjoy had advised him to this course. They were mistaken in this, for the law, which included all coin, whether English or foreign, within its scope, was stringently enforced, and Erasmus lost all his money at Dover.[2]

Thus disastrously ended the first visit of Erasmus to England. In spite of his serious loss, he looked back to it with pleasure, and frequently in subsequent years he expressed an ardent wish to taste once more the happiness of a prolonged sojourn in England.[3]

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 13A, B.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, Praef., Catalogue of Lucubrations ; Allen, I, 275.

[3] *Ibid.*, III, 52E, ep. to James Tutor, dated 18th July, 1501, by Nichols, I, 333 : "Nonnunquam de repetenda Britannia cogito, ut meo cum Coleto mensem unum aut alterum in Theologiae sacris verser, . . . neque enim ignoro, quantus ex ea re fructus mihi capi possit, sed terrent infames scopuli adhuc, ad quos olim naufragium feci."

CHAPTER III

COLET AS DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S. EDUCATION AND SATIRE AS INSTRUMENTS FOR THE BETTERMENT OF RELIGION

THERE is no evidence to show that Colet's work had raised much or, indeed, any hostility against him at the University. Nevertheless, the remark of Erasmus that " he had not sufficient strength of mind to endure the ill-will of men, who (after all, it must be confessed) were defending their own interests," would at least give the impression that, though no open hostility was shown to the lecturer, he was already awakening a spirit of opposition amongst the theologians. What might have happened if Erasmus and some others of Colet's friends had elected to second his efforts no one can tell.

Colet's unsupported endeavours, to all outward appearances, provoked no public opposition. The plan upon which he had been working was not of a nature to arouse a spirit of either enthusiastic support or resistance. There was no revolt against existing authorities, or uprooting of old customs. He sought only to promote a more accurate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to render the prevalent conceptions of the Christian faith truer and more intelligent. The exposition of the Bible was the most necessary work in that age of superstition, credulity, and irreligion on the part of the clergy. Moreover, it is not to be supposed that Colet had any wish to become the leader of a great

movement at variance with the degenerate scholasticism of the time. His retiring, scholarly tastes would have made the inevitable struggle intolerable to him. He probably experienced all the happiness of the successful toiler when he observed the first growth, among the younger members of the University, of a spirit of inquiry and Bible study. He was content that the true harvest of his labours should appear in after years, that other hands should reap the fruits of his sowing.[1]

Unobtrusive as it was, his self-appointed task undertaken to supply one of the most conspicuous needs of the age could scarcely fail to be productive of remarkable effects, although these might not be quick in revealing themselves.

Whilst still busily occupied in the work of exposition of the Scriptures, Colet was, at the instance of King Henry VII, called to London to receive the Deanery of St. Paul's.[2] The date when the temporalities of the dignity were handed over is well settled as May, 1505. But apparently Colet administered the office of Dean for more than a year previous to this date. Dr. Sherburne, who had hitherto been Dean of St. Paul's, was appointed in 1504 to the vacant bishopric of St. David's. This ecclesiastic was at the time performing an ambassador's duties at Rome. It is, therefore, possible that, in the absence of Dean Sherburne, and in anticipation of his appointment to the office, Colet acted as Dean even in the latter part of 1503.[3]

[1] Knight, *Life of Colet*, p. 27, gives a note from *Antiq. Brit.* sub Gul. Warham: "Coletus Paulinas epistolas Oxonii publice interpretatus est; simileque scripturas declarandi institutum Cantabrigiae tum sequutus est doctor Warner. . . ."

Colet seems to have influenced in the same direction Tyndale, Ralph Collingwood (afterwards Dean of Lichfield), and George Stafford—see Seebohm, p. 137; Knight, p. 59; Lupton, *Colet*, p. 114.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 456c-D.

[3] Such is the inference made by Prof. M. Burrows in *Collectanea*, 2nd Series, Oxford, 1890, p. 355, which is supported by Erasmus's ep. of congratulation (dated by Allen as December, 1504) and by More's letter

At the time of his promotion, Colet had the degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred upon him by the University of Oxford, but whether it was a reward for his gratuitous Divinity Lectures, or, as is more likely, in honour of his high preferment, is not known.[1] One thing is certain : he made no effort to obtain any such distinction.[2]

Colet's reforming energies now took another direction. Hitherto all his powers had been exerted in the furtherance of biblical studies as a means of reviving religion. Now there came upon him, in addition, the burden of correcting ecclesiastical abuses. St. Paul's, in his days, presented more than sufficient scope for a fearless and conscientious reformer. Ancient custom had turned the nave of the Cathedral into a busy mart and a resort for newsmongers ; the precincts were the haunt of vicious persons. The new Dean's character warrants the surmise that he attempted to enforce a greater reverence for God's House.[3] If he did make the attempt, the long-established evil proved too strong for him, because it continued unabated to much later times.

Two departments in which Colet effected beneficial changes are mentioned by Erasmus : the restoration of the fallen discipline of the corporation, and the introduction of sermons on all festivals.[4]

When he went to the deanery, Colet had as diocesan a man who was, in all probability, in sympathy with his aims.[5] Bishop Barnes, however, died at the end

referred to below. See also Nichols, I, 374 ; Lupton, *Colet*, p. 120 ; Seebohm, p. 138.

[1] The Doctor's degree was conferred in 1504, according to Anthony à Wood, but neither Seebohm (Appendix on Colet's preferments) nor Nichols (I, 374) feel any confidence in the assertion, owing to a lack of official confirmation.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 95A, 456C.

[3] For Colet's ordinances in 1518, see Lupton, *Colet*, p. 134.

[4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 456D.

[5] Lupton makes a mistake when he says Colet came to St. Paul's

of 1505, and his successor, Dr. Fitz James, never showed any friendliness to the Dean. Colet's attempts to set the affairs of the Cathedral in order would, perhaps, have reached some degree of permanent success under the former if he had lived a few years longer, but, under the latter, met with very little. The exact nature of the improvements which the new Dean tried to effect can only be ascertained by inferences drawn from the known condition of things at St. Paul's. The chantry priests, the vicars of the canons, and the canons themselves, either neglected their duties or performed them in a perfunctory manner. Their worldliness, their unedifying lives, their covetousness, their secular occupations, lay open to censure.[1] We feel sure that Colet reproved these idle and unworthy ecclesiastics. But his authority had narrow limits; and, not even the assistance of Archbishop Warham, or that ef Wolsey, Cardinal and Papal Legate,[2] sufficed to enable him to enforce the performance of the duties of the Cathedral officials or the administration of the large sums which came into the treasury by way of obits and offerings at the shrines. It was well-nigh impossible for Colet to be successful, in spite of powerful support, when his diocesan was hostile and his own canons hardly recognized his right to preside over their Chapter.[3]

Although defeated and discouraged, Colet never

"obviously against the goodwill of the Bishop" (*Life of Colet*, p. 129). Warham had been Bishop of London until 1504 and was succeeded by William Barnes, who died in October, 1505. The former was a firm friend of Colet's, and the latter was probably also well-disposed towards him—see Nichols, I, 388.

[1] See Dr. W. Sparrow Simpson, *St. Paul's Cathedral and old City Life*, London, 1894, pp. 115-8.

[2] Cp. Wolsey's own efforts in 1518.—Taunton, p. 90.

[3] In the time of Bishop Sudbury, the dispute that the Dean had no right to preside over the Chapter meetings, because he had no seat in that society, came before him. He decided that the Dean should always have a Prebendary's stall for this purpose.—Milman (Dean H.H.), *Annals of St. Paul's*, London, 1868, pp. 133-4.

ceased to try to better the discipline of the Cathedral until he died. The amendments he sought to introduce were all in the direction of higher virtue and greater holiness.[1] When he demanded high principles in the inferiors, it was clear that he expected remarkable spiritual qualities in the canons and superior officials. Nor do exalted conceptions of ministerial duties come strangely from one whose mind was filled with Dionysian visions of the Christian Hierarchy. What was unusual was Colet's thought that the daily practice and life of the actual Christian ministry ought to conform to the theories of the pseudo-Areopagite. The times were rough, and the real state of things in the Church differed considerably from the ideal. In fact, so great was the difference, that few ever seriously contemplated the possibility of the two being brought into close agreement. Colet was one of these few.[2] Those immediately affected by his opinions found them troublesome and subversive. Hatred and resistance naturally followed, so that his tenure of the deanery was one prolonged conflict between the ideals of the Dean and the practices of the Cathedral clergy.[3]

Colet did not abandon the work he had begun at Oxford. He, indeed, invited friends to preach in the Cathedral,[4] and probably also, he brought pressure to bear upon that part of the Cathedral organization which had to do with preaching. The Chancellor was by Statute bound to preach, but by means of a quibbling interpretation of the wording of the law, he had omitted, for some considerable time before Colet's advent, to perform the work.[5] Bishop FitzJames, in

[1] Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 129-37.

[2] See Professor Montagu Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[3] Dr. Simpson, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-1, 108-9.

[4] Such as the Carmelite John Sowle (Knight, *Colet*, p. 62), and the Scottish theologian, Dr. John Mayor or Major (*Hist. Reg. Henrici Septimi a Bernardo Andrea Tholosate conscripta*, etc., edited by Gairdner, London, 1858, pp. 105-6).

[5] Dr. Lichfield's excuse was that "the Statute required him to lecture

all likelihood moved thereto by the representations of the Dean, reminded Dr. William Lichfield, the Chancellor, of his duties, and decided that either the Chancellor or his deputy should deliver a lecture three times a week.

But Colet did not rely on the labours of the Cathedral lecturers or of his own friends and assistants. He himself was a most indefatigable preacher. On all festivals, including Sundays, he took his place in the pulpit, and expounded not a separate text from the Bible, but a large subject continued through many sermons.[1] To fit himself for this work, he had made preparation long before, when he studied the books of eminent English writers with a view to the refinement of his speech for the delivery of Gospel sermons.[2] The success of his labours was proved by the numerous auditory he always had. Many of these were City magnates and prominent officials of the royal Court. One member of the audience (Thomas More) has left a record of the effect produced upon himself by Colet's earnestness in preaching and the influence of his upright and evangelical life.

More and his friend Lily, just about this time, were living an ascetic life and meditating seriously their withdrawal from the world into a monkish order, or at least into the priesthood.[3] They had more reasons for this design than a propensity towards a religious life. Thomas More had offended King Henry VII by a bold

without cessation (*continue*), and that was an undertaking beyond the power of man." See Lupton, *Colet*, p. 140.

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 456D.

[2] *Ibid.*, 456B: "Habet gens Britannica qui hoc praestiterunt apud suos, quod Dante ac Petrarcha apud Italos. Et horum evolvendis scriptis linguam expolivit, jam tum se praeparans ad praeconium sermonis Evangelici."

[3] *Tres Thomae, seu Res Gestae S. Thomae Apostoli, S. Thomae Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis et Martyris, Thomae Mori Angliae quondam Cancellarii*, Authore Thoma Stapletono Anglo S. Theol. Doctore, DVACI, Ex. off. Io. Bogardi, 1588, p. 18.

speech in the Parliament of 1503-4 against the demands made by the King through Dudley for excessive and illegal subsidies. Soon after, on a convenient charge, old Judge More, the father of the rash young Member of Parliament, was imprisoned in the Tower, and Thomas More himself retired into obscurity as the safest course to take.[1] In his trouble he had found an honest friend in Colet, whom he had probably known from childhood, and whom he now viewed as his spiritual guide and wisest counseller in temporal matters. Accordingly, he wrote a letter to Colet towards the end of 1504, when the latter was spending some time, by way of vacation, in the country, perhaps at his rectory of St. Mary's, Dennington, Suffolk.[2] More, on the plea of his own benefit and that of the other inhabitants of London, begged Colet to return to the Cathedral pulpit.[3]

Erasmus, it is true, had declined Colet's invitation to participate in the work of biblical exposition, but he had done so on what appeared to himself good grounds. A sense of his own insufficient equipment for such a work had been the principal factor in determining his action. Yet, during the years that followed, he did not forget the promise he had given to his English friend. Five years separate that letter of refusal and the next extant epistle of his to Colet. But an examination of the letters that he wrote, in the meanwhile, to various correspondents reveals him deep in studies which were designed to lead up to the fulfilment of the promise he had made.

That he had written to Colet in this interval of time, without receiving any reply, appears sufficiently clear. Perhaps Colet felt no reliance on the promise. When

[1] Warner (F., LL.D.), *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Thomas More, with the History of Utopia*, London, 1758, pp. 7-9.

[2] The Latin ep. is to be found in *Tres Thomae*, etc., Authore Th. Stapletono, Coloniae Agrippinae, 1612, pp., 163-5. See also Knight, *Colet*, pp. 139-44; Seebohm, p. 149; Lupton, *Colet*, p. 145; Nisard, pp. 165-6.

[3] This letter is dated "10 Cal. Novembris." Several important considerations fix the year-date as 1504.

everything is considered, it must be admitted that, beyond the mere words of that promise he had nothing upon which to found confidence, nor indeed was the promise itself unconditional. From whatever cause it happened, Colet sent no reply to Erasmus.

Shortly before the former was appointed Dean of St. Paul's, on 15th February, 1504, Thierry Martens, of Antwerp, had printed Erasmus's *Enchiridion militis Christiani*.[1] It was a copy of this little work which Erasmus enclosed with the letter of congratulation that he sent to the newly-appointed Dean towards the end of 1504. From this epistle it will be observed how anxious Erasmus was that Colet should know he was really eager to devote himself to biblical labours.[2]

> It is impossible to say, most excellent Colet, with what eagerness I am hastening to sacred literature,[3] how much I dislike everything that draws me aside, or even delays me. . . .
>
> Three years ago I made an attempt on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans; I finished off four books, as it were at one operation, purposing to continue, but certain things drew me away, among which the chief was that I constantly felt my need of Greek. So, for nearly three years, Greek studies have almost entirely occupied my attention, and I do not imagine that I have altogether laboured in vain. . . .

It is not a little curious that Erasmus in this letter

[1] This famous manual (which, later on, was placed on Quiroga's *Index prohibit.*, 1583) arose out of a request made by a lady that Erasmus would use the influence he possessed over her husband, an officer in attendance upon the Princess of Veer at Tournehem Castle, for his soul's benefit—see *Eras. Op.*, I, Praef.; Nichols, I, 341; Allen, I, 373. Erasmus, in the preparation of the treatise for publication, was guided by the advice of John Vitrier, a man more than ordinarily Christ-like in character.—*Eras. Op.*, III, 90A-B, and 461E-F. An attempt has recently been made to identify this worthy Franciscan with that Vitrarius, also a Franciscan, who fell under the censure of the Theological Faculty of Paris, 2nd October, 1498—cp. Allen, notes on *Gardianus* and *Praedicator*, I, 372 and 303, and *Eras. Op.*, III, 54A and 453B.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 94-96. Allen, I, 403, dates it "c. Dec. 1504."

[3] "Quam velis equisque properem ad sacras Literas."

made no reference to a work on which he must have either entered at the time, or, at any rate, determined to execute. As this was one in which Colet would have taken a lively interest, it seems probable that Erasmus would have told him if he had actually begun it. A suggestion has, indeed, recently been put forward that, assuming that Erasmus had truly commenced the undertaking, he might not have decided what he would do with it, and for this reason did not mention it to Colet.[1] The work to which we allude is his edition of the *Annotations* of Laurentius Valla on the Latin text of the New Testament. In the previous summer, as Erasmus explains in the dedicatory epistle,[2] he found a copy of Valla's book in an old library, and thereupon formed the eager desire to edit it. Since the book contained a critical study of the text of the Latin Vulgate in comparison with the Greek MSS., it had not been hitherto looked upon with favour by the common sort of theologians. Erasmus at first dreaded the undertaking, on account of the enmity attached to the name of Laurentius Valla. He foresaw clearly enough that any work which attempted to alter the common methods used in the interpretation of Holy Scripture was liable to arouse the opposition of both the Scotists and the Thomists. The scholastic methods included the extraction of manifold senses from the Vulgate, every word of which was regarded as inviolable and unalterable. Valla's book clashed with these methods, because it questioned the accuracy of the text.

Accordingly, Erasmus based his defence of the Italian critic on the proofs which he was able to adduce that Valla had been merely an imitator and follower of St. Jerome himself. One passage in particular is well worth quoting, because it contains the vindication of

[1] Nichols, I, 380.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 96D. The dedication is addressed to Dr. Christr. Fisher. Josse Bade completed the printing of the book on the Ides of April, 1505.

all attempts to emend the text of Scripture. Here, indeed, Erasmus briefly enunciates for all time the *raison d'être* of biblical criticism :—

> "But," say they, "it is not lawful to change anything in the Holy Scriptures, because in them not even the dots are void of mystery." True, and therefore all the more unlawful is it to corrupt them, and all the more carefully ought that to be corrected by the learned which has been falsified through ignorance. Yet in this labour, there should be exercised that circumspection and prudence which are due to all books, and particularly to the Holy Bible.[1]

When writing to Colet, Erasmus had suggested to him that he should urge Lord Mountjoy to assist his former preceptor. Colet apparently took the hint. At any rate, shortly afterwards Lord Mountjoy sent a pressing invitation to Erasmus to come to London.[2] In response, he arrived in England about the time of the publication of his edition of Valla's *Annotations*, and found a welcome in Lord Mountjoy's house which was near St. Paul's. Close around were the friends he had gained on his first visit to this country. Not only Mountjoy and Colet, but also Linacre, Grocyn, and More were in London at that time, and lived not far from one another. And Erasmus now enlarged the circle of his friends Either Mountjoy or Colet introduced him to the Bishop of London, Dr. Barnes. The first two items of Erasmus's correspondence which belong to this second English visit are dated from the Bishop of London's Palace—a fact which probably indicates that Erasmus was temporarily lodged there. By means of Grocyn's goodwill, he gained the valuable friendship of William Warham, who had lately been advanced to the archbishopric of Canterbury and the office of Lord Chancellor. About this time also he won the friendly regard of Cuthbert Tunstall, and improved

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 99A-B.
[2] See the ep. to Servatius, *ibid.*, III, 1871A.

an already existing acquaintance with Bishop Fox of Winchester. Dr. John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, cousin of that Robert Fisher who had been a pupil of Erasmus at Paris ten years before, now became known to the genial humanist.

The eyes of Erasmus had been long turned towards Italy, but the opportunity of journeying thither had delayed its arrival. However it came at last. Baptista Boerio, King Henry's Genoese physician, wished his two sons to proceed to that country for educational purposes, and asked Erasmus to accompany them. When the Dutch scholar had returned to Paris, and was making his preparations for the long-desired journey, he wrote to Colet on 12th June,[1] expressing his mingled feelings of regret at parting from the kind friends he had recently gained in England and of pleasure at meeting once more those whom he had left behind in France.

In spite of his expectation of an early return to England, a number of years passed before he saw these shores again.

Two misfortunes fell almost simultaneously on Colet. He had scarcely begun the task he had set himself at St. Paul's when death removed two powerful supporters, his friendly bishop, Dr. Barnes, and his father, Sir Henry Colet.

Although the new Bishop was not at first hostile to the Dean's efforts, yet he could not altogether be ranked amongst those who looked with favour upon them; and he does not seem to have had intimate relations with any of the members of Colet's circle of friends. As time went on, the persons most interested in thwarting Colet's plans sowed the seeds of dissension between Dr. Fitz James and him; and the Bishop discovered, or fancied he discovered, reasons of his own for enmity against his Dean.

His father had been to him a firm and reliable pro-

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 99.

tector. The difficulties with which, from this time forward he had to contend, though they might not have been altogether prevented from arising by the great interest and power of his father, nevertheless would have been considerably lessened by the political influence of Sir Henry Colet. His bereavement, however, put him in a position to carry out a project he had in mind for the advancement of religious knowledge. On the death of his father, Dean Colet inherited valuable property. He at once resolved to devote it to the cause of religion by providing for the education of the young in good learning and Christian godliness, in other words, by founding a school in which these two important things should be equally inculcated.

Long before and after Colet educational institutions were established for objects closely similar to those prefigured in the Dean's plans. Perhaps it is not unnatural that, in all things that pertained to the acquisition of knowledge, ancient traditional methods and curriculums should have possessed, during the middle ages, undisputed authority. But Colet, when he was founding his school, appeared to his contemporaries to be devising a new thing, whilst he was being guided by a conservative spirit much more than they, and perhaps he himself also, realized. No difficulty need be experienced in marking the points in which his school was analogous to earlier institutions.[1]

Education had experienced all the tyranny of arbi-

[1] For fuller information, consult Lavisse (Ernest), *Histoire de France*, Paris, 1903, t. II, 243-51, 266-70, 342-8; Guettée (M. l'Abbé), *Histoire de l'Église de France*, Paris, 1856, t. III, 87-122; West (A. F.), *Alcuin and the Rise of the Christian Schools*, London, 1893, pp. 48-58; Taylor (Henry Osborn), *The Mediaeval Mind*, London, 1911, vol. I, chap. IV, and V, vol. II, book VII; Monnier (M. Francis), *Alcuin et Charlemagne*, Paris, 1863; Robertson (Canon J. C.), *Hist. of the Christian Church*, London, 1876, vol. III, 120-1; Michelet, *Hist. of France*, Smith's trans., London (Whittaker & Co.), s.a., vol. I, 84-7; Draper (Dr. J. W.), *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, New York, 1876, vol. I, 373-4.

trary limitations from the time of Cassian until the revival of classical learning known as the Renaissance.[1] At the same time we must not forget that the great churchmen of the early centuries of the Christian era had fought a stern and protracted warfare with a paganism everywhere present and oftentimes dominant. In consequence, though they had derived no small part of their intellectual powers from pagan culture, they set their faces against heathen literature because they imagined, rightly or wrongly, that it tended to the preservation of the pagan spirit.[2] That battle was not ended when the Empire fell, but the antagonistic attitude of the Christian Church continued in force even after all fear of a revival of paganism had passed away. The Goths and Franks set no value on the literature or culture of the Romans they overcame; the Church which henceforth became the guardian of learning only cared for so much of it as had direct connection with the services of religion. Accordingly, the course of study to which the monasteries and the cathedral schools were restricted was a very narrow one. Such as it was, however, it formed the only basis of education from the fall of the Empire until the establishment of the Universities in the thirteenth century. Even then, although the University undoubtedly did noble service in the cause, it was always shackled with the traditionally hostile attitude of the Church towards the classics of ancient Greece and Rome. The Renaissance, at whatever period it arose in the several nations of western Europe, found its champions and its home amidst the Colleges and Halls of the Universities. But it never was an unchallenged guest there, it never received the official sanction of the University authorities. This is easily accounted for by

[1] Mullinger (J. B.), *The Schools of Charles the Great*, London, 1877, p. 31.

[2] Mullinger (J. B.), *The University of Cambridge to the Royal Injunctions of* 1535, Camb. Univ. Press, 1873, p. 7.

what has been already said. The hostility it met with, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at the hands of the entire ecclesiastical party, and the open indifference, or positive dislike, which very many of the reformers, Catholic and Protestant, displayed towards it, must be noted as in no sense the fault of these men; they simply could not overcome in themselves the prejudices which they had inherited from St. Augustine of Hippo and Cassian, or unlearn the lessons their spiritual forefathers for so many centuries back had been teaching.

Wherever the northern races had settled ignorance of the most pronounced type prevailed, amongst not only the Christian laity but the secular clergy also. The inevitable results followed: by the time of the Carolingians the former became corrupt in morals, and the latter lost all sense of their spiritual responsibilities.[1]

To correct these evils, Charles the Great (better known, perhaps, as Charlemagne), amid his busy life in camp and court, prosecuted with zeal and determination the splendid work of conducting an ecclesiastical reformation by means of education. His enactments to this end sought to enforce a certain amount of instruction upon both laity and clergy.[2] He also tried to improve the condition of religion by raising the status of ecclesiastics, and by correcting the laxities of discipline in monasteries and amongst the clergy.[3] Councils, moreover, swayed by the determination of the Emperor, enacted various decrees which embodied his wishes,[4] and some of the bishops cordially seconded

[1] Mullinger, *Sch. of Ch. the Gt.*, p. 37, *et seq.*

[2] See his Capitulary of 787, *ibid.*, pp. 97-8; Rashdall, I, 28-9; Baluzius (Stephanus, Tutelensis), *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, etc., Paris, 1677, tom. prim., 201-204, epistle addressed to Baugulf, Abbot of Fulda; Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, II, 342-348.

[3] Mullinger, *Sch. of Ch. the Gt.*, pp. 101-2; Baluzius, I, 261-72, 357-60, and 361-76.

[4] Council of Arles (813), canon 19; Council of Mentz, canon 45—*Sacrosancta Concilia ad regiam* editionem exacta . . . studio Phil.

Charles's efforts by promoting education within their jurisdictions. Of these, Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, proved himself to be possessed of a marvellously wise discernment, in some respects far in advance of the age in which he lived.[1]

But it was under Alcuin,[2] the British teacher from York, that the most notable projects for the encouragement of learning were formed.

The main feature of the educational schemes initiated by Alcuin was the pre-eminence of sacred studies.[3] No better course probably could have been devised than to attempt to satisfy the requirements of that time by means of the elevation of public and private morality and the restoration of religion. Yet the character of his designs was too ecclesiastical for the general purposes of human life, and, besides, conspired to strengthen the bonds in which ecclesiasticism held for many centuries all exercise of mental powers. Thus, Alcuin's influence manifested at the same time reactionary and progressive tendencies.

Of all his pupils none displayed more perfectly the direction of the master's efforts than Lewis the Pious, the successor of Charles the Great. Such capitularies as he published, during his reign, on the subject of education—and they were numerous—viewed it solely from the ecclesiastical standpoint.[4] It has, however,

Labbei & Gabr. Cossartii, S. J. presbyterorum, Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1671, tom. VII, 1238, 1251; Binius (Sev.), *Concilia Generalia et Provincialia Graeca et Latina*, Paris, 1636, VI, 214, 229.

[1] In 797, he issued to his clergy a Capitulary, in which he not only propounded a lofty ideal of study, but enjoined the establishment, of every town and village in the diocese, of schools where "the children in the faithful" should be taught free of charge.—Labb. et Coss., VII, 1140.

[2] Guettée, III, 92, says this renowned teacher's name ought to be written Alkwin. The usual form is, however, adhered to here. Later on in life, Alcuin himself assumed Albinus as a Romanized form of his name, to which he added Flaccus.

[3] Mullinger, *Sch. of Ch. the Gt.*, pp. 110-3.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 128 *et seq.*; Labb. & Coss., VII, 1534; Baluzius, I, 634, 1137.

to be remarked that the measures enjoined by him were of an enlightened kind and do honour to his judgment.[1]

Unfortunately the revolt of Lewis's sons and the civil wars consequent thereon swept away most of the results of Alcuin's labours.[2] Nevertheless, the impulse given, during the closing years of the eighth century and the first quarter of the ninth, never entirely lost its force, but survived in the improved condition of the cathedral and monastic schools.[3] In spite of the fact that the pursuit of knowledge thus continued to rest exclusively in clerical hands, it was out of the beginnings at that period made that the greatest agency for the diffusion of knowledge in modern times was eventually developed. From the cathedral schools of Carolingian days has sprung the University system, and herein lies the explanation of the essentially ecclesiastical character of the University, at any rate in northern Europe, during the middle ages.[4] True, the Universities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries strove to attain freedom from ecclesiastical control. Sometimes, a brief period of liberty rewarded their efforts, as, for instance, at Oxford in the fourteenth century. But they invariably fell back again, and that more completely, into the fetters out of which they had struggled. Nor is there here any cause for astonishment. In those same fetters the University system has been born. Accordingly, the justest estimate of Oxford

[1] One estimable instance of his piety and wisdom was the order he issued for the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular of his time, the *lingua teudisca*.—Mullinger, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[2] The foundation of three large public schools—a remarkable anticipation of a later movement— was actually about to be accomplished, when the civil wars broke out and frustrated the enterprise.—Labb. et Coss., VII, 1663.

[3] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, p. 19; Bulaeus (Caesar Egassius), *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, Parisiis, 1665-1673, I, 79-83: *De Scholis Coenobialibus et Episcopalibus*, and (*ibid.*, 91-100) *De Institutione seu Fundatione Univ. Paris.*

[4] Rashdall, I, 28-30.

University in Colet's time is that it was nothing else than an overgrown cathedral or monastic school.

As in the case of the Carolingian regulations, the later movement towards religious reform included efforts for the improvement of education. The latter half of the fifteenth century, therefore, witnessed in England a rapidly increasing propensity towards the founding of public schools. But there were many difficulties to be overcome, for suspicion had in previous generations attached to the whole educational system of the country the stigma of propagating heresy. In consequence of this the profession of teacher had been abandoned as too liable to incur the repressive measures directed against Lollardism;[1] even when the new tendency began to display itself, from 1431 onwards, by the opening of new schools, though scholars were vastly numerous, teachers were few.[2]

Amongst the schools in London when Colet became Dean of St. Paul's, there existed one belonging to the Cathedral itself. What seems the obvious course for the Dean to have taken, in his anxiety to promote education, would have been to revive and extend the school which was connected with the corporation of which he was the head.[3] Serious hindrances, however, stood in the way of such a proposition. In northern Europe, from originally being the administrator of the schools of the clergy, the Chancellor had, in the process of time, arrived at the entire superintendence of education in the diocese.[4] But in the diocese of London the

[1] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, p. 349. [2] Rashdall, II, chap. XII, sect. 9.

[3] A correspondence appeared in *The Times* of May, 1902, relative to the question as to whether the present school of St. Paul's is to be regarded as the direct descendant of the ancient cathedral school. Mr. Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 154 *et seq.*, has very fully and ably discussed the whole question, and has traced the history of the cathedral school to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

[4] Mullinger, *Sch. of Ch. the Gr.*, pp. 130-1 ; *Statutes*, etc., *of the Cathedral Church of York* (2nd edit., Leeds, 1900), p. 6.

According to Bulaeus, I, 82, the head of the monastic and cathedral schools, in ancient times, was called "alibi Decanus vel Cancellarius."

Chancellor was limited to the supervision of education in the city alone, and even there some exemptions from his authority existed.[1] Dr. William Lichfield united in his own person the offices of Chancellor of St. Paul's and Master of the Schools, as well as that of Divinity Lecturer. That dignitary was scarcely the man to exert himself in the cause of learning who had neglected the very duties incumbent upon the sacred offices he held. Apart from the Chancellor, however, it is still very questionable whether the Dean entertained a high enough opinion of the possibilities of a school so completely under ecclesiastical domination as the Cathedral grammar-school to have seriously meditated such a course. The school he created he removed as far as he was able from ecclesiastical control.

Possibly the year 1509 may be taken as that in which Colet put his plans into operation.[2] So intensely earnest was he in this project that he devoted almost his entire patrimony to it.[3] As a matter of fact, it involved an outlay of about £4,500, a large sum in those days, representing over £50,000 in ours.

Colet dedicated the school to the Child Jesus, an image of Whom stood over the High-Master's chair. The scholars were required daily to salute the Holy Child with a hymn at the opening and closing of the school. He limited the number of pupils to 153, on what ground has never been satisfactorily explained.[4]

For the task of instructing these boys he appointed two teachers, the High-Master and the Sur-Master, and also a chaplain, to whom he allocated emoluments which, judged by the standard of the times, were unquestionably generous.[5]

[1] Simpson (Dr. W. Sparrow), *Chapters in the History of Old St. Paul's*, London, 1881, pp. 31, 48, 49.

[2] Colet himself gives 1512 as the date of the foundation.—Lupton, *Colet*, App. A., and Knight, *Colet*, Misc. No. V. Probably he meant that the work of foundation was completed in this year.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 457B; Pol. Verg., *Anglicae hist.*, p. 618.

[4] Cp. Knight, *Colet*, Misc. No. V, and Lupton, *Colet*, p. 166.

[5] Seebohm, *Oxf. Ref.*, p. 219.

The pains which Colet took to demand qualities of not only intellect and efficiency in these officials, but also virtue, piety, honourable conduct, and steadfast adherence to the conscientious discharge of their functions, illustrate, no less completely than the express words of his Statutes, the object he had in view when he established this institution. Nor did he cease during his lifetime to manifest the same intense pre-occupation in its welfare. For example, he frequently conjured his friends to apply their talents to assist him in bettering his project. Thus, at one time, he was desirous of school books, for he felt dissatisfied at the prospect of adopting as the basis of instruction in his school the somewhat antiquated manuals in use elsewhere.[1] Accordingly, to comply with his desire, Erasmus produced two works specially composed for the Coletine school, the *Institutum Christiani Hominis* and the *Copia Verborum*.[2] At another time we hear of a certain grammar which Linacre was induced to write for a like purpose, but this book was found to be too elaborate for the pupils.[3]

How far Colet was subject to the ideals of his contemporaries, in spite of that "spirit of prophetic liberality" with which he has been justly credited for a remarkable provision he made for the administration of his school;[4] how far he was governed, in spite of the bold initiatives he took at Oxford and in London, by the spirit of the preceding ages and the conservative

[1] A feeling of dissatisfaction with the defects of existing grammar-books had truly come to be a sign of the tendency of the age.—Rashdall, II, 515. Cp. Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 23-5.

[2] Catalogue of Lucubrations, *Eras. Op.*, I, 2. For the *Institutum* consult *Eras. Op.*, tom. V, and for the *Copia*, tom. I.

[3] Colet himself compiled a text-book for his scholars which he called *Rudimenta Grammatices*. Cardl. Wolsey, when making arrangements for the school he had founded at Ipswich, adopted Colet's little book for its use.

[4] Admitting his inability to provide for all the contingencies that might arise in time to come, Colet left the whole future arrangement to the conscientious labours of the Mercers.—Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, p. 472.

notions prevalent in his time, will be best comprehended from his attitude towards the literature he indicated as the standard course for his beneficiaries. He desired the pupils to be first of all grounded in religion and Latin grammar, then to study the two Erasmian books, and after these to read such authors as Lactantius, Prudentius, Proba, Sedulius, Juvencus, and Baptista Mantuanus. His list would excite surprise if it were not remembered that his object in founding the school, by his own confession, was "specially to increase knowledge and worshipping of God and our Lord Christ Jesu, and good Christian life and manners in the children." The end he had in view when he drew up his list of authors he thus explains :—

> All barbary all corrupcion all laten adulterate which ignorant blynde folis brought into this worlde and with the same hath distayned and poysenyd the olde laten spech and the varay Romayne tong which in the tyme of Tully and Salust and Virgill and Terence was vsed, whiche also seint Jerome and seint ambrose and seint Austen and many hooly doctors lernyd in theyr tymes. I say that ffylthynesse and all such abusyon which the later blynde worlde brought in which more ratheyr may be callid blotterature thenne litterature I vtterly abbanysh and Exclude oute of this scole and charge the Maisters that they teche all way that is the best and instruct the chyldren in greke and Redyng vnto them suych auctours that hathe with wisdome joyned the pure chaste eloquence.[1]

No doubt this outburst of Colet's indignation against "blotterature" can be assigned to the dislike he bore to the scholastic philosophy of his day and the wretched jargon employed for its expression. And it may be added that this indignation was kindled into a fierce flame by his abhorrence of the coarseness and impurity of another type of the literature most praised in his time—that of the classical authors of the post-Augustan

[1] Lupton, *Colet*, App. A.

age and of their imitators among the humanists.[1] For all that, a consideration of the list of authors he drew up will convince anyone that Colet in this performance was largely influenced by the educational ideals of the preceding centuries. His list, in fact, and his reasons for it, are perfectly analogous to those of Gregory the Great and Alcuin. The character of Colet is, indeed, not without its parallels to that of each of these bygone worthies; his plans were not altogether unlike theirs, and consequently there is nothing to be amazed at if the means he adopted for prosecuting those plans were not dissimilar either. Doubtless, it will always provide ground for remark that one so gifted with the power of initiative and so capable in pursuing undauntedly new paths towards reform, should have actually embodied in the rules of instruction for his newly founded institution the narrow spirit which had hitherto dominated, to his hurt, the whole empire of literature and knowledge. But even great men—great discoverers, great inventors, great innovators of whatever kind—are, after all, the creatures of their epoch, and, though they conspire to advance the human race in some few particulars, for the rest, they leave the world much as they found it. That may be regarded as the law of human endeavour: each great man has his own department wherein, and wherein alone, he is great—in all else he is as another. Colet, the great religious teacher, the great pioneer of peaceful reform, when he came to the details of an educational system, followed exactly in the foot-tracks already deeply worn by the passage of the educationists of the previous thousand years. One looks to him in vain for a sympathetic appreciation of the best works of the Golden Age of either Rome or Athens. He was no humanist. Lactantius and Baptista Mantuanus represented his

[1] He may, perhaps, have also meant to condemn the uses to which the Latin language was put by the humanists, such as Poggio, Filelfo, Beccadelli, and others. For these, see Symonds, *Rev. of Learn. in Italy*, pp. 235-6, 256, 520.

highest ideal of Latinity, because, in point of fact, his aims were not literary but religious. He might not, as Alcuin in his later years, have been ashamed of his Virgil,[1] but, nevertheless, the thought of the Carolingian teacher was none the less really present in the mind of the sixteenth century Dean of St. Paul's.

The entire administration of the school and its endowments, Colet committed to the Honourable Company of Mercers of London. This course he took only after much anxious consideration.

> There is nothing, said he, certain in human affairs, yet he found less corruption amongst married citizens of worthy repute, such as the Company of Mercers, than amongst any other class of men, not excepting the clergy.[2]

The Dean was fortunate in securing William Lily as the first High-Master of the school. This god-son of Grocyn's had travelled much in the East after his course at Oxford had concluded, and had there studied Greek to such good purpose that on his return to England he formed one of a triumvirate of profoundly learned Grecians, of whom Grocyn and Linacre were the other members.[3] Lily, when a young man, had had, with his friend Thomas More, some inclination towards a monastic life. But he had followed that friend's example and married, and had opened a private school in London—an enterprise which proved a great success.

Colet's institution thus entered on its existence under favourable auspices. It received the hearty approba-

[1] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, p. 17.

[2] "Reditibus totique negotio praefecit non sacerdotes, non Episcopum, aut capitulum ut vocant, non magnates, sed cives aliquot conjugatos, probatae famae. Roganti causam ait, nihil quidem esse certi in rebus humanis, sed tamen in his se minimum invenire corruptelae."—*Eras. Op.*, III, 457E.

[3] Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 170-1.

tion of all lovers of learning,[1] and of all those who hoped for a reform in religion quietly and successfully conducted by means of education. The circumstances which attended its foundation, that is to say, its ample endowments; its establishment by an eminent ecclesiastic, who nevertheless deliberately arranged for its exemption from all ecclesiastical interference; the occupancy of its mastership by one of the most brilliant scholars of the period; and, in addition, that novel provision for its future management which has excited admiration in our days—all these united to confer distinction upon the school from the time of its origination.

But, indeed, Colet's scheme, marked though it was by exceptional characteristics, did not long stand alone; it served, like his other works in that age, as a pioneer. For, just as his labours in lecturing on the Bible at Oxford were succeeded by similar efforts, not only at that University, but also at Cambridge and elsewhere, so his educational projects were closely followed by a succession of endeavours directed to a similar end. After Colet's distinctive initiation of constructing education upon a religious basis, all benefactors who had the cause of religion at heart, followed his lead. In the regulations made by Bishop Fisher for the foundation of the College of St. John the Evangelist at Cambridge, and by Bishop Fox for the foundation of that of Corpus Christi at Oxford (both in 1516), we observe a like emphasis laid upon the expediency of imparting religious teaching to the students in the vernacular as we have seen Colet had already put in the rules for his school.[2] A few years later, Cardinal Wolsey endeavoured to introduce beneficial changes, for which he adopted

[1] Erasmus, *Op.*, III, 457D, thus expresses his opinion: "Vidit illud vir perspicacissimus, in hoc esse praecipuam Reipublicae spem, si prima aetas bonis rationibus institueretur."

[2] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, pp. 472, 522; Baily (Dr. Thomas), *Life and Death of that renowned John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester*, London, 1655, pp. 11, 12, 15.

the higher education of the clergy and the general encouragement of learning, secular and religious, as the foundation.[1] These are only a few representatives of the great body of eminent men of that epoch, chiefly ecclesiastics, who, moved by the degenerate state of religious ideals and beliefs, sought to repair the evil by promoting a more perfect knowledge of the Christian Faith.

Institutions for the advancement of learning were frequently accompanied or followed by the composition of works on the theory of education. Thus, Erasmus did what he could to assist Colet in carrying out his plans, and formulated schemes of religious instruction. The holy Bishop of Carpentras in France, Cardinal Sadolet, in a subsequent decade, laboured to impart what he considered a wholesome understanding of Holy Scripture, and tried to raise the spiritual condition of the Christians not only of his own diocese but throughout western Europe.[2] He also has left to posterity among his numerous writings one that is accounted his *chef d'œuvre*, in which he displays his own opinions on the art of education.[3] Of both Erasmus and Sadolet it has to be noted that they approached the question from the humanistic standpoint. Indeed, Sadolet's treatise can be fittingly enough described as a work devised in the spirit of Marcus Aurelius but expressed in terms of Christianity ; for the illustration of the noble models of perfection he portrays the worthy Cardinal does not, in a solitary instance, cite a Scriptural personage : he appears to know of no heroes save those of classical antiquity.[4]

[1] Taunton, *Wolsey*, p. 66.

[2] Charpenne (P.), *Traité d'Éducation du Cardinal Sadolet et Vie de l'auteur par Antoine Florebelli* (Latin text with French translation), Paris, 1855, pp. 34-9, 345-6.

[3] *Jacobi Sadoleti, De Liberis rectè instituendis Liber*, for which consult Charpenne.

[4] Perhaps this circumstance may be explained by the necessary exercise of caution in those times (nearly a generation later than Colet),

Education[1] was not the only measure, in that age, which had for its object the betterment of religion. There were at hand other instruments of a different quality, negative in their tendencies, destructive in their results. Of these the most powerful was Satire. The era to which Colet's constructive effort belonged is that in which there also appeared a book still famous and well known—Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae* (*The Praise of Folly*). That this work played a certain distinguished part in the drama which was gradually unfolding itself is undeniable; but it must not be reckoned the first of its kind chronologically, however pre-eminent it be in power. Sebastian Brant had already, in 1494, produced the *Narrenschiff* (*The Ship of Fools*), of which the main idea was to represent the failings, the abuses, in Church and State, and the iniquities of that generation, as the follies of mankind.[2] Brant, it is true, holds up the sinner, the cheat, and the dolt to ridicule, and does this in a way which displays a pungent and observant wit, yet he fails to work out his conception in a complete form, and, consequently, fails also to suggest any thought of correction or amendment. The *Narrenschiff*, therefore, fulfils to some extent the office of a mirror to Brant's contemporaries. It serves no other purpose. Like a mirror, it confines its duty to the simple portrayal of present appearances. Such a book,

when a profound knowledge of the Bible made a Christian liable to incur the reproach, if not also the penalties, of heresy—see his letter to Fregoso, Archbishop of Salerno, in May, 1536, *Jacobi Sadoleti, Episcopi Carpentoracti, Epistolarum Libri Sexdecim*, Coloniae, 1567, p. 124. But no one could place greater importance on biblical studies than he did; he was constantly in the habit of urging them upon his friends and correspondents as "omnis nostra salus, omnis beatae et immortalis vitae spes."—*Epp.*, pp. 219, 341, 394, etc.

[1] It may not be without interest to notice, with reference to the connection between plans of reform and instruction, that Strasburg became, as early as 1524, the seat of an educational institution which conferred no small amount of prestige and strength upon the reformers in that city. —See Herminjard, I, 407, 433 note 11.

[2] Creighton, VI, 13-6.

after the first laugh has passed away, usually vanishes into oblivion, for the most part of mankind, and the work he composed would probably be unknown to-day if it had not been for the subsequent production of a class of literature of which the *Narrenschiff* was in fact the prototype.

Although Erasmus may have owed something to Brant as regarded the form of the *Encomium Moriae*, the thought, the idea, that suggested its composition appears to have been quite spontaneous. Erasmus was returning, in June 1509, from Rome to England, and no doubt on the journey his mind dwelt frequently upon the person for whose house in London he was bound—Thomas More.[1] The name More was so akin in sound to the Greek word *Moria* (Folly) that it was easy to pass from one to the other, and the further transition from Folly to the innumerable "follies" which he had witnessed in his travels through the world was but a short step. Thereupon, his meditations took concrete form, and when he had reached More's house,[2] he wrote in about a week a book which has always been held to represent the grave dissatisfaction of Erasmus himself with the blatant defects of contemporary life. No one who gazes upon Holbein's portrait of him can escape the reminder administered by the wide mouth, thin lips, sharp nose, and half-closed eyes, that this is indeed the author of the *Praise of Folly*. Holbein, in short, has presented to the human race a picture of Erasmus the satirist rather than that of Erasmus the eminent theologian.

Between the time when he left England in company with the young Boeri for the journey into Italy (1506), and his return to this country, the Dutch scholar had visited in succession Turin (where the D.D. was conferred upon him), Florence, Bologna, Venice, Padua, and Rome.[3]

[1] In his Dedication, Erasmus states that this was the origin of the book. [2] Seebohm, p. 194.

[3] For this part of Erasmus's life, consult Pierre de Nolhac, *Érasme en*

Whilst he stayed at Bologna a remarkable occurrence took place which made a profound and lasting impression on him. Pope Julius II entered that city in military triumph towards the end of 1506. The incongruous spectacle of the Head of the Christian Church comporting himself as a victorious general and receiving, in that capacity, political honours and adulation implanted in the mind of Erasmus that abhorrence of the warrior-pontiff and his doings which recurs with observable frequency in his epistles.[1]

An event now happened which raised the hopes of the humanist. Henry VII of England died, and was succeeded by a prince who had already shown much favour towards learned men and with whom Erasmus had had some correspondence. The latter therefore felt that he might reasonably expect a warm welcome from such a monarch. Lord Mountjoy, moreover, wrote to him (at the end of May) assuring him that he could rely on the patronage of King Henry VIII, and that Archbishop Warham had promised a benefice.[2] With this letter he sent a sum of money to defray Erasmus's expenses on the return journey. That person lost no time in responding to so cordial an invitation, and quitted Rome in June or July, notwithstanding the efforts of the Venetian Cardinal, Domenico Grimani, to persuade him to remain.[3]

As has been already said, it was upon this return

Italie, Paris, 1888, pp. 16 *et seq.*, 67-70; Nichols, I, 407, 417-26, 437, etc.; Drummond, I, 167-9; Firmin-Didot (Ambroise), *Alde Manuce et l'hellénisme à Venise*, Paris, 1875, p. 317; *Eras. Op.*, I, 993A and epistle of Rhenanus to Charles V.

[1] Nisard, pp. 28-29. In an ep. of 25th August, 1511, Erasmus has a passage which Nichols, II, 21, assumes to bear reference to this Pope's appetite for war: "Jam hoc commodorum, quae ex bullis sanctissimis capiuntur, initium est, siti enecamur."—*Eras. Op.*, III, 108E. Allen, I, 466, puts an entirely different construction on the phrase; he takes it as alluding to Erasmus's shortness of funds in consequence of having to pay for a dispensation.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 8B, E.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1375C, D; Allen, I, 452.

journey to England that Erasmus originated the plan of the *Encomium Moriae.* Whilst composing it he entertained no idea of publication. Very likely, at its inception he had no further object in view than to give amusement to his host and the frequenters of his host's house. But More, or some friend of his, obtained possession of the manuscript, and, without submitting it to its author for revision, despatched it to Paris, where Richard Croke arranged with the printer Gourmont for its publication. This event took place in 1511. It will thus be noted that two whole years elapsed between its composition and publication, yet, from lack of proper revision, the seven editions which followed one another in rapid succession, within a few months of its first appearance, were a source of disquiet to the author, because they had been printed from a copy " not only full of mistakes, but even incomplete."[1]

Whatever defects the eye of Erasmus might discover in its production, it won the public favour at once, but its popularity arose more from the theme treated of than from the fame of its author. Though rapidly composed it reflected Erasmus's sense of humour and perception of the ludicrous. Nevertheless, the difference between Brant's *Ship of Fools* and Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* is quite fundamental. The former presents a satire, pure and simple, which points no moral ; as for the latter, Erasmus consented to the publication of the book only because he was convinced that it might possibly serve to teach, to rebuke, to correct. Sarcasm in truth constituted a far smaller part of his theme than merriment. By temperate ridicule he hoped to create a hearty abhorrence of present-day evils.

Accordingly, Folly, mounted in a pulpit, criticizes Grammarians, Philosophers, Theologians, Monks, Kings, Princes, and Popes. The methods of scholastic theology are assailed with ridicule.[2] His wit turns against

[1] *Erasmi ad Dorpium Apologia*, Allen, II, 90-114.
[2] *Eras. Op.*, IV, 468-9.

the monastic and religious orders, who (as he says) assume both titles unjustly. "Monastic" should imply that they live a solitary life, whereas they are always to be found in the midst of crowds; their "religion" consists of trivial observances and strict conformity to foppish ceremonies.[1] He represents those persons before the tribunal of Christ and the account they give of themselves there and the various claims that they put forth for admission into heaven. Among all the different duties which they declare they have performed the Lord does not discover obedience to the one precept He left, namely, to love one another. The Saviour, therefore, bids them depart, and the bitterness of their rejection is increased by their beholding ploughmen and mechanics entering that heaven from which they themselves are excluded.[2] Folly next proceeds to laugh at the manner and worthlessness of their preaching.[3]

The words that Folly has to deliver on Kings and Rulers, as these were in Erasmus's time, do not fall far short of the highest wisdom.[4]

Not once, but on several occasions, in his correspondence, Erasmus animadverts severely upon Pope Julius II, and his predecessor Alexander VI.[5] Most, if indeed not all, of these censures occur soon after his Italian travels, and indicate the effect produced on his mind by a somewhat intimate acquaintance with the Papacy in its home.[6] It is natural, therefore, to find that Folly rebukes the modern type of Popes, and, to their detriment, contrasts them with the ancient.[7]

[1] *Ibid.*, 471A-472A. The English trans. of the *Praise of Folly*, published by Hamilton, Adams & Co. in 1887, is recommended to the reader who prefers to examine this work in the vernacular.

[2] *Ibid.*, 472-474A.

[3] *Ibid.*, 475A-478C.

[4] *Ibid.*, 479B, C.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 778E, III, 108A, 110C, 115D, etc.

[6] Nolhac, pp. 77-80.

[7] *Eras. Op.*, IV, 482E-483C, and 484A-C.

Reviewing the methods of ecclesiastical administration and the care bestowed upon religion, Folly sums up the condition of affairs by accusing the people of leaving the business of religion to ecclesiastics as if they themselves had no connection with the *ecclesia* through baptism, and at the same time by reproving the various orders of clergy for transferring that burden from one to the other :—

> Likewise the Pontiffs, being far too much occupied with their money-gathering, deliver over their most distinctively Apostolic labours to the Bishops, the Bishops to the Parsons, the Parsons to the Vicars, the Vicars to the Friars. These last again shove them upon those who shear the flock of its wool.[1]

It was a bold attack. So veiled, however, so hidden beneath the shadow of the cap and bells that, as Erasmus said in the Dedication, "he who cried out that he was hurt would only reveal the stings of his conscience or his dread of disclosure."[2]

Nevertheless, it may well be questioned if the entire controversy of later years with the Protestant reformers ever produced severer denunciations or bitterer invectives against the Roman hierarchy and the religious orders than Erasmus has put into the mouth of Folly. Not even Calvin, in his *Letter to Paul III*, or in his *Inventory of Relics*, reached such a degree of acrimony. Although the French reformer expressed his damnatory statements in polished language, his fault-finding was characterized by relentless mordacity, sometimes even by offensive personalities. But Folly's reproaches attained a much higher rank in pungency and efficacy from the half-humorous manner of their delivery and the care with which they were restrained within the limits of the actual truth.

The issue of this book was not meant for a party

[1] *Ibid.*, 485E-486A.

[2] "Ergo si quis exstiterit, qui sese laesum clamabit, is aut conscientiam prodet suam, aut certe metum."

attack, since at the time no party as yet existed that could claim it as a weapon of assault. But undoubtedly the book formed an instrument, and that a most potent one, in favour of reform, through its exhibition of the notorious scandals which required it. The occasion of its publication, moreover, was singularly appropriate. Old man as he was, Pope Julius in the January of 1511 had braved the rigours of winter and betaken himself to the command of his army at the siege of Mirandola. There he had conducted himself as a general, scolding his officers and sometimes using coarse language and oaths for enforcing his authority.[1] His nephew, the Duke of Urbino, had murdered the Cardinal Alidosi in the streets of Ravenna (May, 1511) whither the Pope had come.[2] Alidosi's death was no great matter of regret to his brother Cardinals, but some of these had their own grievances against Julius. Moved, therefore, partly by private animosities and partly by desires for reform, five of them drew up a summons for a General Council to meet at Pisa on 1st September, and caused a notice of this to be affixed to a church door in Rimini, to which place they were aware that the Pope was advancing. Of the contemporary monarchs Louis XII of France and the Emperor supported the revolt of the Cardinals. Henry VIII of England, instead of joining, sent to the Pope the letters which Cardinal Carvajal, the leader of the malcontents, had addressed to him.

Immediately on his arrival in Rome Julius announced that he had most anxiously been meditating the advisability of convening a reforming Council, and forthwith summoned one to meet at the Lateran in the following April (1512). His only object in this move was to stultify the Cardinals' Council at Pisa by making it appear that he entertained a serious intention of removing scandals and introducing salutary changes.

So stood the affairs of the Church when the *Praise of*

[1] Creighton, V, 143.

[2] See the trans. of *Julius Exclusus* in Froude, *Erasmus*, p. 161.

Folly issued from Gourmont's press in Paris and Schürer's at Strasburg. To a Christendom amused with the wise sallies of Folly the rebellious Cardinals, on the one hand, and the Pope with his Cardinals, on the other, presented a pitifully ludicrous spectacle, as they cursed, excommunicated, and deposed each other, without any awful consequences ensuing—if indeed any one of the belligerents expected them to occur.

From 1509 to 1511 Erasmus passed his time in London, residing for the most part, presumably, either in the house of Thomas More, or that of Lord Mountjoy. During the last of these years, he paid a short visit to Paris at or about the time of the publication of the *Praise of Folly*.[1] When he returned to England, he went to Cambridge to lecture in Greek on the understanding that he was to receive a small stipend from the University.[2] He hoped also to obtain fees from the students who came to his lectures. Archbishop Warham's generosity provided occasional additions to his funds. This account of his income precludes us from supposing that Erasmus was actually overloaded with presents, but likely enough the assistance his patrons gave him would have been deemed ample for any other literary man of that time. Erasmus, however, was always in need of books, and these proved expensive. Without them he was restless, because unable to continue his work. To obtain these and some other things which he regarded as indispensable he constantly pleaded, nay begged, to have larger funds at his disposal.

Whilst in London he met Dean Colet frequently. There occurs, therefore, no epistle from one to the other during that period. But the first letter he wrote after his arrival at Cambridge seems to be that which he sent to Colet.[3]

> If my misfortune can rouse thy laughter, thou hast plenty at which to laugh. For besides those

[1] Cp. Seebohm, p. 205. [2] Nichols, II, 18. [3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 108.

mischances that befell me in London, my man's horse went lame, because the hostler had changed the one Bullock had provided.[1] Next, there was no food to be obtained on the entire route. The following day, rain, and nothing but rain, until dinner-time.[2] After dinner, thunder, lightning, showers, horse stumbling thrice. Bullock, having taken an observation of the heavens, said he noticed that Jove was somewhat angry!

At last I am satisfied that I behold the footprints of Christian poverty! Of gain I hope for none, since here, indeed, I learn that I am to squander whatever I can drag from my patrons. There is here a countryman of mine, a physician, who claims to work marvels by a remedy of the fifth essence. He makes young men out of grey-beards, living men out of dead ones. So I have some hope of becoming young again, if only I can get a taste of the fifth essence. If that occurs, I will not at all regret coming hither. For, as to profit, I see none. What can I make out of those who have not, since I am not a rascal, and have not been born under the benign favour of Mercury?[3]

Farewell, excellent teacher. When I begin to lecture I will let thee know how the business progresses, as thou wilt have something more to excite thy laughter.

Cambridge, Queen's College,[4] August 24th, 1511.

Perchance I shall dare even to enter upon thy Paul. Behold the audacity of thine Erasmus! Again farewell.[5]

Colet replied to this letter, but his answer has not been preserved.

[1] Bullock (Bovillus) was resident at Cambridge.

[2] *I.e.*, about 10 or 11 a.m., if the hours of meals in Colleges and Universities are to be taken as the usual hours throughout the country.—Rashdall, II, 653.

[3] Mercury was the god of thieves.

[4] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, pp. 496-506, gives some interesting particulars regarding Erasmus's stay at this College.

[5] That is, to produce a commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul.

CHAPTER IV

LEFÈVRE D'ÉTAPLES AND THE MOVEMENT HE INITIATED AT PARIS

DURING the first phase of the reform movement in France, of the men whose labours were purely evangelical and guided by Catholic instincts, no inconsiderable number derived their origin from the northern part of that country, especially from Picardy and Artois.[1] Chief among them was Jacques Lefèvre (Jacobus Faber Stapulensis), of Étaples, a place which at the time of his birth lay on the confines of the Boulonnais, but was afterwards included in Picardy. His name is to-day very familiar to French Protestants, who claim him as the first "Réformateur." He was indeed a reformer, but in an entirely different sense from that in which this title is conferred upon Calvin, Beza, and the rest of their company. His aims were dissimilar in character from those of the great leaders of French Protestantism, and approached much more closely, in idea and execution, to those of Dean Colet whose contemporary he was.

This remarkable man, one who wielded enormous influence in his day, has been forgotten by all but Frenchmen. But, in his own time, his fame does not seem to have reached to any degree beyond the limits of his native land,[2] and, even within them, he was not

[1] Lalanne (Ludovic), *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François Ier*, Paris, 1854, pp. 378-84, 447-9; and pp. 291, 450.

[2] Bilibald Pirckheimer had a high regard for him.—*Eras. Op.*, III,

always much more than a name to his compatriots.[1] Nowadays, the difficulty experienced when an attempt is made to reconstruct his history does not proceed from any ambiguity as to his position or influence among his contemporaries, but solely from the absence of sufficient means for ascertaining the details of his life.[2] Efforts in recent years to obtain some new and interesting facts have been rewarded with very indifferent success. A few more scattered notices of him or a few more epistles addressed to him constitute the entire gain. Consequently, it appears vain to expect that a really satisfactory biography of Lefèvre d'Étaples will ever be written. The similarity between Colet and Lefèvre in character, thought, and action, extends to this particular also. For, if it were not for the epistles of Erasmus, Colet would be even less known than his French contemporary, and there are many *lacunæ* in the life-history of the Englishman which no lapse of time is likely to fill up.

Lefèvre was born at Étaples, a seaport of north-western France, in or about 1455.[3] This little town,

550C, 618D. He was well known in Germany as a philosopher—see Delaruelle (Dr. Louis), *Guillaume Budé, les origines, les débuts, les idées maîtresses* (*Études sur l'humanismus français*), Paris, 1907, p. 51. Spanish theologians (especially Stunica), and English theologians (such as Bishop Fisher), were acquainted with his writings. Doumergue (Prof. E.), *Jean Calvin, Les hommes et les choses de son temps*, Lausanne, 1899, I, 550, cites Kawerau as declaring that he found traces of Lefèvre's *Quincuplex Psalterium* in Luther's lectures on the Psalms in 1513-1516, and Scheibe as proving his influence over Calvin.

[1] *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, p. 277.

[2] Barnaud (Dr. Jean), *Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, son influence sur les origines de la Réformation Française*, Cahors, 1900, p. 9, complains of the disappointment he experienced from his fruitless endeavours to obtain additional materials.

[3] There is great divergence of opinion as to the year of his birth, and sometimes the difference is serious. Some put the date as early as 1435, thus making him a centenarian at his death. Doumergue, I, 78 and App. IV, has examined the evidence and decided for this early date. Yet Dr. Delaruelle seems justly to object to carrying the date higher than 1445.—*Guill. Budé*, p. 46 n. 4. Dr. Graf, *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, 1852, note on pp. 4 and 5, fixes upon 1450 as the approximate year.

known as Quantowic during the reigns of the early Frankish kings, is situated on the right bank of the river Canche. Its harbour was a celebrated one under Dagobert and Charlemagne, and, save for Rouen, constituted the only place of embarkation for England. Accordingly, it was from here that St. Augustine took boat for his missionary tour in Kent. The Church of St. Michel, where this event is commemorated with a tablet, claims to have been built by "Angli"—English prisoners, according to local tradition—in 1004. Incursions of Northmen, however, reduced the port to a ruinous state, and, though its ancient marts and corporation were revived by a communal charter in the thirteenth century, it was not until the fifteenth that its trade attained notable proportions. Thus, in his infancy, Lefèvre witnessed the new life and intense activities of his native place. Once more its markets became thronged with sailors and merchants of many nations. Contact with the foreigners who came there no doubt had its effect in developing an originality of thought, an independence of judgment, which remained a marked characteristic of Lefèvre all through his life. His faculty of curiosity was stimulated by the appearance of so much that was unfamiliar. His eager desire to find the real grounds on which things rested and his dissatisfaction with the explanations usually offered by authority, derived their origin from his wanderings amongst the visitors to Étaples and the conversations of which he was an attentive auditor. To those early surroundings we must attribute, above all, that deeply rooted conception of the Catholicity of the Christian Church which afterwards coloured his teaching so distinctively. When he left Étaples, he carried with him a profound and conservative sense of religion which is still a noted trait of the Étaplois. For these, descended as they are from the diverse races that used to throng the little port, retain in their popular Christian beliefs to-day a strange mixture of pagan notions handed down from far-off ancestors.

As the boy displayed a capacity for learning, Lefèvre's parents, who appear to have been in comfortable circumstances,[1] sent him to the University of Paris. Once there he cared so little for anything beyond study that he abandoned to his greedy brothers and nephews his own rights of inheritance.

At the University he attached himself, by inclination, to the small company that enthusiastically admired the ancient Classics. To call him, therefore, a devotee of literature and a philosopher is not altogether an error. But, as we shall see presently, whatever his admiration for the humanities, other mental tendencies and his innate reverence for sacred things deflected that admiration into a direction which cannot properly be termed either "humanistic" or "Christian-humanistic." There was little or nothing of the humanist about him. A living French writer observes that hitherto the only aspect of Lefèvre's life-work which has received adequate attention is the reformatory or religious, and thus (he implies) his importance as a great philosopher, a great "littérateur," has been obscured.[2] But it is unquestionably true that the religious work of Lefèvre surpasses, in quantity, lasting value, and celebrity, his purely literary or philosophical labours. A glance at a moderately correct list of his productions will suffice to justify the inferences of his earlier biographers.[3]

[1] One authority, Florimond de Rémond (*Histoire de la naissance, progrès et décadence de l'hérésie de ce siècle*) says, "Le Fèvre qui portoit le surnom d'Estaple, village de sa naissance, pauvre enfant sans berceau et sans aveu." But this remark may be safely rejected, in face of overwhelming contemporary evidence to the contrary—see Graf, *Zeitschrift*, etc., p. 6 note, and Doumergue, I, 79, n. 5.

[2] Delaruelle, p. 46, n. 4.

[3] Graf, *Zeitschrift*, etc., p. 10, correctly enough remarks: "In his studies of the Classics he attended more to what they said than to the skill with which they said it. And when, later on, he occupied himself with biblical studies, he discarded the reading of the Latin poets such as Tibullus, Catullus, Terence, Ovid, which were put carelessly into the hands of the young—indeed, he thought the works of Lucretius, Pliny,

There is no distinct record of him before 1488-89. We only know that he had, by that time, attained the degree of Master of Arts and had entered into Holy Orders. Whether he ever actually exercised the functions of a priest, or held a benefice, cannot now be determined. His ecclesiastical status corresponded, indeed, with that of a clerical fellow of Oxford or Cambridge at the present day. It is an error to describe him, as some have done, as a Doctor of the Sorbonne, for he never graduated in Theology. In the year mentioned,[1] he went on his first journey to Italy, a country he possibly visited on several occasions before the close of the century. He certainly was there again in 1500. A controversy has arisen over the date of his first visit to Italy, some maintaining that he travelled thither in 1492 for the first time,[2] others asserting the earlier date given above. The latter would seem to be the most likely.

As in Colet's case, the first Italian journey signified for Lefèvre the entrance upon a new phase of intellectual existence, in which there was much that appealed to his unusually independent mind and his passion for investigation. From this event must be reckoned his deep interest in one particular department of Greek literature. Italy did not make him a humanist,[3]

Lucian, etc., ought to be destroyed." Dr. Graf is here citing Lefèvre's comments on 1 Cor. xv, 33 and 2 Cor. v, 7. In the latter place, he apostrophizes some of the Classical authors thus: "O Plini, o Luciane, o infelix Epicure, o surdi et coeci et quotquot hujus infelicis scholae hac in parte sunt discipuli."

Like Colet, Lefèvre disliked humanistic "blotterature."

[1] Barnaud, *Lefèvre d'Étaples*, p. 12.

[2] For instance, Delaruelle, *Guill. Budé*, p. 46, n. 5. Doumergue, however, I, 79, n. 6, adduces much evidence in support of 1488-9. On the other hand, Graf, pp. 8-9, has a note showing that the visit must have occurred in 1492. The proofs he produces for this date are very strong, but nothing that he shows invalidates the statement of Beatus Rhenanus in a letter to Reuchlin (given by Bulaeus, VI, 492): "Jacobus Faber . . . philosophiam . . . ita illustravit, ut Hermolao Barbaro et Argyropylo Byzantio, praeceptoribus olim suis, huic longe plus nitoris attulerit."

[3] Delaruelle, p. 53.

indeed, but there he learned to appreciate the philosophy of Aristotle, whom he preferred to Plato, and to become dissatisfied with the prevalent type of scholastic philosophy in proportion as he studied the writings of the Greek philosopher in the original. On his return to his own country, he formed the determination to give Aristotle to his compatriots in a purer and more correct form than had hitherto been possible. During the middle ages Aristotle was not altogether unknown in western Europe; but, inasmuch as information concerning him had come through Arabic sources, his works had suffered considerably from the devious routes by which they reached the mediæval student.[1]

The years that followed his return were busy ones for Lefèvre at Paris. He lectured on philosophy and mathematics, and published the Logic, Physics, and Ethics of Aristotle, which he corrected in accordance with the Greek texts.[2] But if he so delivered himself to the study and teaching of philosophy, he had no idea of permitting abstract speculation to become the goal of his labours. Lefèvre had learnt in his childhood, as he watched the traders in his native place, the practical lesson of drawing from mental qualities some definite advantage or profit. Hence, all through his life, study, whether of philosophy or literature, or of any other branch of learning, subserved one end—the good of Christianity. This attitude of mind marked the wide difference between Lefèvre and the scholastic philosophers of his time.

[1] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, pp. 95-6: "The statement of Renan leaves us almost bewildered as we seek to realize the labyrinth which the thought of Aristotle was thus doomed to traverse: 'Quant à la barbarie du langage d'Averroës, peut-on s'en étonner quand on songe que les éditions imprimées de ses œuvres n'offrent *qu'une traduction latine d'une traduction hebraïque d'un commentaire fait sur une traduction arabe d'une traduction syriaque d'un texte grec.*' "

As Mr. Mullinger points out, *ibid.*, p. 154, translations, direct from the Greek, of the Nicomachean Ethics were made as early as Bp. Grossteste of Lincoln (1175-1253). This would appear to have been an English anticipation of Lefèvre's labours.

[2] Barnaud, *Lefèvre*, p. 14; Delaruelle, *Budé*, p. 52.

Three periods in the growth of his thought manifest themselves. The first, occupied with mathematics and philosophy, ended in 1498. His pursuit of truth in philosophy led him by slow degrees to deep meditation of holy things;[1] and accordingly, the second period began when he exchanged the study of the pagan philosopher for that of the Christian mystics.[2] In these works of piety he was immersed for ten years. During that time he resided in the College of Cardinal Lemoine, where he delivered lectures and had many famous pupils. Of these, two deserve particular mention, as they represented, later on, two schools of thought amongst those who sought to reform the Christian religion in France. One was Guillaume Farel, the fiery apostle of militant Protestantism, the precursor, friend, and assistant of John Calvin. The other was Guillaume de Briçonnet, Bishop of Lodève, a cultured nobleman, son of a minister of the Crown, who had taken orders and become Archbishop of Narbonne and Cardinal.[3] We shall have occasion in later chapters to mark the careers of these two persons whose lives took such divergent courses. It was not till 1508 that Lefèvre began to devote himself in earnest to the exposition of Holy Scripture and thus opened the third and final period of his life-work. From this date until the end of his earthly existence, he consecrated all his powers to this sacred task.[4]

The commencement of the sixteenth century witnessed in France a distinct turning of many minds towards ecclesiastical reform. A characteristic of this phase of thought was the desire to combine all that was good in the Classical Renaissance with the eternal verities of religion. "To broaden Christianity, to purify Humanism, to blend them into one grand religion which should comply with the requirements of the intellect and the soul, such was the aspiration of

[1] Barnaud, *op. cit.*, p. 15. [2] Delaruelle, p. 48.
[3] Creighton, IV, 234. [4] Delaruelle, p. 48.

those who adopted the ideas of the great Christians of the fifteenth century, Gerson, the Brethren of the Common Life, and Nicolas of Cues."[1] But the traditions of authority, as well as the conservative dispositions of most of the clergy, were everywhere opposed to any such ideals. Little by little, the prestige of the great theologians of the thirteenth century had been substituted for that of Holy Writ. "Christianity threatened to date from St. Thomas Aquinas."[2] But, indeed, their disciples had gradually departed from the road marked out by the great Doctors. The juridical and ecclesiastical temper of those disputants, who called themselves by party-names derived from these noble leaders of mediæval theology, introduced too close an adherence to the letter of the text, as well as a perverse system of commentation thereupon, into the works of the Masters in such a manner that "exegesis became doctrine and the School ended by superseding the Church."[3]

If the difficulties, which, in consequence, presented themselves to all who sought to restore the honour and usefulness of Christianity, stood in the way of Lefèvre's project, nevertheless, at that epoch, no one was, by circumstances and training, better qualified to impress on his generation the value of a knowledge of the Bible. Not only did he possess a firm faith in Christianity, as it was set forth in the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, but also the very bent of his mental powers facilitated such a congenial task, formed as these were by the convergence of the mystical and the intellectual in a marvellously simple soul.[4] Thus the philosopher, the mystic, and the savant coexisted in him with the gentle, faithful Christian. But besides these qualifications of head and heart, he enjoyed, as the restorer of the Aristotelian philosophy,[5] a high reputation in the

[1] Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, V, 339.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 340. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 342.
[5] See Reuchlin's letter to Lefèvre, 31st August, 1513, given by Bulaeus,

University of Paris and throughout the learned world. If it had not been for his cautious and mild temperament, he might well have become the centre of the company of brilliant scholars then to be found in Paris, over whom he undoubtedly exercised a powerful influence.[1] Moreover, about 1508, certain advantages accrued to him which increased his power and reputation. In the first place, he obtained, though not a monk, a secure residence in the famous monastery of St. Germain-des-Prés. Here he dwelt, not as an inmate subject to rules and restrictions, but as the favoured scholar, the honoured guest of the family, the Briçonnets, that held the Abbacy. About the same time too he received an introduction (probably through the same distinguished family) to the Court,[2] an event which was to prove of inestimable value to him in later days. That these circumstances tended to impart to Lefèvre's position, weight and importance is to be inferred less from the actual records of French history or from anything he himself has written than from the place assigned him by German and English scholars of his time, themselves of no mean rank in their own countries.

The first result of the new direction of his studies was the *Quincuplex Psalterium* published by Henri Estienne in 1509. It is somewhat difficult to bestow a sufficiently descriptive title upon this work. Clearly it was intended to be a kind of study in Textual Criticism, a science indeed not yet born. The first portion of the book is occupied with the three Latin Versions of St. Jerome, called by Lefèvre the "Gallican," that is, the version

Hist. Univ. Parisiensis, VI, 61, and by Herminjard (A. L.), *Correspondance des Réformateurs dans les pays de langue française*, 2de édition, Genève et Paris, 1878, I, 12; Sir Thomas More's lengthy letter of remonstrance to Martin Dorpius, 21st October, 1515, in *Eras. Op.*, III,1896D, E.

[1] Epistle of Beatus Rhenanus, quoted by Delaruelle, p. 46, from Clerval, *De Iudoci Clichtovei Vita*: "J. F. Stapulensis, qui tum propter emergentia studia meliora quibus pro virili succurrebat, tantum non Deus quispiam videbatur."

[2] Barnaud, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

adopted in Gaul, the " Roman," that adopted at Rome, and the " Hebrew," that which was made direct from the Hebrew for Sophronius. These are printed in parallel columns for the purpose of comparison. The second portion contained the Old Latin Version (that in vogue before St. Jerome made his versions) and Lefèvre's own revised or harmonized (*Conciliatum*) version, these two being also printed in parallel columns.

It would be of great interest and value now to know what manuscripts he used. We are aware, from the labours of Robert Estienne in 1540, that there then existed many precious codices of the Vulgate in the library of St. Germain-des-Prés. In his preface to this work Lefèvre mentions his having consulted many ancient, worm-eaten codices, but that is all he says about them.[1] Yet the very form of his Quincuple Psalter displays an acquaintance with the MSS. of St. Germain-des-Prés and those of other considerable libraries of that era.[2] The statement that Lefèvre performed several long journeys for the purpose of advancing this work, though it is unsupported by particulars, receives confirmation from the fact that he must have seen, and perhaps also employed, in the execution of his task, a number of notable manuscripts then the property of distant communities and corporations.[3] A Psalter setting forth the most renowned versions, with corrections from the ancient Hebrew original or from the Greek, was by no means a novel product. For, one of the results of the movement towards reform in the eighth and ninth centuries had

[1] " Pii et religiosi viri Cartusii et Celestini . . . deflentes tam dignum et insignem patrum nostrorum laborem inter tineas et blattas longo situ deperire."—*Quincuplex Psalterium. Gallicum. Romanum. Hebraicum. Vetus. Conciliatum.* Paris (Hen. Steph.), 1509, Preface addressed to Cardl. Briçonnet.

[2] He refers to them perhaps in these words: " ut in vetustioribus bibliothecis licet adhuc intueri."—Pref. to *Quin. Psalt.*

[3] Graf, pp. 17-9, and notes 33-6, mentions extensive voyages undertaken by Lefèvre.

been the establishment under Alcuin of the calligraphic school at Tours whose work spread throughout the neighbouring countries, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands, as well as France. Sometimes originals, sometimes copies, of the noble productions of this Alcuinian school of consecrated penmanship are still to be met with in divers places. One peculiarity of them is that not unusually the Psalters are double, triple, or quadruple: the Gospels and Bibles bear traces of attempts at revision, or what we should, in modern style, term critical emendations. Accordingly, we hear of a Spanish codex of the ninth century which has three Psalters, Gallican, Hebraic, and Ante-Hieronymian;[1] of another at St. Gall, a bilingual Psalter (Greek and Latin) of the same period, which is probably connected with the bilingual Psalter at Basle;[2] of the famous quadruple Psalter of Salomon III, Abbot of St. Gall (891-920), which gives the "Gallican," "Roman," "Hebraic," and "Greek" versions, the last being written in the Roman characters, thus: "Marcarios anir os uc eporeuthi," etc.[3] Not the least remarkable of all is that which Robert Estienne called "S. Germani exemplar parvum," and which is as old as any of those mentioned.[4] That Lefèvre consulted many other manuscripts is evidenced by his retention of the ancient form in the compilation of the critical part of his work. His book originated no new method; as a scholar he was wholly conservative. But if he therein advanced the science of textual criticism not a single step, he at least, in his Quincuple Psalter, revived the conception of it that had existed in the days of Alcuin and Theodulf. And that was something. It signified, in effect, the restoration of a forgotten art at that point where it had fallen into disuse, and imparted to it a fresh impetus likely to terminate in undreamt-of possibilities.

However, it is abundantly manifest that his mind was

[1] Berger (S.), *Histoire de la Vulgate*, Nancy, 1893, p. 15.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 115. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 130-1. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 178-9.

not so much concerned about the critical part of his task as about the expositions which he appended to the several Psalms. This portion of his book displays the influence of the new ideas, the new religious forces—or perhaps we ought to say, the primitive Christian faith then in process of revivification—and, consequently, is most valuable to those who are interested in determining Lefèvre's place in religious history. From it may be gathered the reasons which have led historians to class him as a reformer. As a means to stimulate devotion he knows of no instrument more effective than the word of God, and, that the knowledge of it should be undiluted and pure, he rejects the prevalent method of exposition by manifold senses, oftentimes artificial and jejune. He follows simply what he calls the spiritual sense. According to it the practical value of the Psalms lies principally in the application of each of them to Christ, or His Church, or to Christ's dealings with His Church. Therefore Lefèvre's exegetical method resolves itself into an attempt to emphasize the evangelical element in Scripture and to exalt its value as the highest accessible source of spiritual comfort and admonition. Indeed, in the Preface he draws attention to this as the chief purpose of his labours :—

> I must beseech Christ, Who is the beginning and end of all Psalmody, that it may not only be accepted, but that it may prove of service to many to attain happiness.

A modern French biographer of his[1] has discovered the doctrine of Justification by Faith only in the *Expositio Continua* of Psalm vi, where Lefèvre says : " Da mihi salutem aeternam, non quia dignus sim, non quia meritus sim, sed ob solam miserationem et gratiam tuam." But, here it may be remarked once for all, with regard to Lefèvre, that one is certain to

[1] Barnaud, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

err if one forgets that the essential feature of his biblical work is an outlook that is always practical, not doctrinal or theological. Such expressions of dogma, if ever made deliberately by him, are only incidental and never constitute his main pre-occupation. He was anxious that men should read the Bible and ponder it, and he strove to enable them to do so from the most profitable point of view. He was not directly concerned with the doctrines they might deduce from it.

1508 is the date when he began to devote himself exclusively to this noble enterprise. But it must not be thought that his mind only then turned to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the exposition of them. For, before the Christian mystics engrossed his attention he had produced (in 1498) a little book entitled, *Theologia vivificans*.[1] In it he expressed thoughts concerning the authority and worth of Holy Writ not more profoundly true than in strict accordance with those he entertained in much later years :—

> The nearer one is to the sun the more light one gets. For that reason the greatest deference and authority ought to be conferred upon the Holy Gospels. . . . Attention, piety, religious feeling, deference and humility, such as assist and prepare the mind, are needed in applying oneself to sacred studies. Those who possess not these qualifications are only made worse by the study of holy things.

And yet Lefèvre laid aside this study for ten years and occupied himself with works of piety which, however valuable and serviceable in themselves, were not (in his own expressed judgment) to be compared with the Scriptures ! Observe that when he resumed the sacred task with the clear intention of prosecuting it he began just where he had left off ten years previously :—

> Truly, for a long space of time, I have pursued human studies and scarcely tasted of the divine (they,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

> indeed, are venerable, and not to be rashly approached), but so much light appeared to shine forth from that acquaintance with them, however distant, that, in comparison, human learning seemed to be darkness itself.[1]

What explanation, therefore, shall adequately bridge that gap of ten years? There was much at the earlier date to induce him to proceed with the plans in his mind. He had been in Paris[2] when Colet, on his return from Italy, spent a short time there, and there is very good reason to believe that the two became sufficiently intimate to exchange ideas upon the state of religion. The great similarity of thought evident in their works; their common inclination towards the mystical; the dissatisfaction they both felt with the theological attitude towards biblical studies, and their preference for the practical rather than the dogmatical in religion; their concord in rejecting biblical exposition by manifold senses—these enable us to see a correspondence in ideas between them in no sense accidental but the outcome either of an intimate acquaintanceship, or of such a close sympathy as resulted from subjection to the same powerful influences. Let it be remembered that Lefèvre himself had been to Italy, certainly to Venice and Rome, probably also to Florence. Let it also be remarked that the striking personality of Savonarola impressed itself upon the imagination of the French monarch and his courtiers; and other Frenchmen, travellers also in Italy, no doubt fell under the spell of the abnormal individual who had prophesied the march of their king. The Florentine preacher was, consequently, a man whom no Frenchman was likely to overlook. Lefèvre, moreover, swayed by the charac-

[1] Preface to *Quin. Psalter.* Alluding to this passage Prof. E. Doumergue exclaims: "Saluons avec respect cette lumière divine qui se lève dans la nuit universelle; c'est l'aurore de la Réformation."—t. I, p. 81.

[2] Lefèvre had returned to Paris by 1494, and taken up the office of lecturing.—Graf, p. 11, note 14.

teristics of his nature and experiences, was even more liable to the influences of the great Dominican than Colet. If the latter remained silent as to the name of Savonarola, and nevertheless is believed on very good grounds to have had direct relations with him, the same may likewise be reasonably enough assumed with regard to the former. To what has been so far said it may be added that Lefèvre is stated to have had friendly intercourse with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola[1] with whom no one, in the later years of his life, could have been on terms of friendship, however remote, and yet have failed to learn something of the man that he admired so devotedly. Indeed an acquaintance with Giovanni Pico, during 1492-1494, precludes the possibility of Lefèvre's ignorance either of Florence, of Savonarola, or of Savonarola's teaching, whilst it almost certainly implies somewhat of sympathy with the great Dominican's religious ideals. The cautious temperament of the Frenchman would sufficiently account for his undertaking the study of the Scriptures (so ardently advocated by the Florentine preacher) at that time when there was every reason to believe that a General Council would be convened by a French king which might, in all likelihood, support the recently broached religious aspirations, and for his suddenly abandoning it when the catastrophe in Florence manifested the dangers of such a course. This conviction that Lefèvre was influenced by Savonarola rests, it is true, upon conjecture, but there are many things, if not to corroborate it, at any rate to justify it. For instance, his insistence on the Catholicity of the Church as opposed to any absorption of it by the dominant "Roman" Church is quite after the spirit of the Dominican. In the Preface to the *Quincuplex Psalterium* he terms the Roman Church "Ecclesia gallis transalpina," and the Gallican Church "Ecclesia cisalpina." It is, however, in the *Adverte* to Psalm xlvii

[1] Graf, *Zeitschrift*, etc., p. 9, note 10; Delaruelle, p. 47.

(xlviii), v. 2, that he delivers himself in bold words little moderated by his habitual caution[1]:—

> But thou wilt say: Why is the Church called *latera aquilonis*, the sides of the north? Because nothing is hid from the Spirit of God. Peter, indeed, placed the Church upon a rock, that is, on Christ, first at Antioch, afterwards at Rome, both of which lie to the north. But what then? Shall we call the Church the Church of Rome? By all means, but confer still greater honour on it, and call it the Church of the Rock. For it was said to Peter: Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church. It was not said, on Rome. . . . If any person mention to me a Church of Antiochus, of Alexander, of Romulus or Remus, I give it no recognition, because it obscures, covers, hides the true title, the title of My Lord, My God, the Great King. If mention be made of the Church of the Rock, the Church of Christ, forthwith I recognize it. Yea, and he who terms it the Church of Peter uses a lower title than he who calls it the Church of the Rock. For it is not Peter's, unless it be that of a deputy, a steward, a proxy. But it is the Rock's, as that of the rightful Head of the Household, the rightful King. If Peter were asked about its title, he would give it its true name and no other (*non alieno*): he, in heaven, is my witness! The true name makes all things one, but he who speaks of the Church of Antioch, the Church of Alexandria, splits up this title, and as unity brings forth the love of all, so division breeds dissensions.

In thus maintaining the inherence of Catholicity in the Church, though opposing the curialist determination of it, Lefèvre was at one with the eminent French conciliarists of the fifteenth century, and indeed constituted himself the mouthpiece of the thoughtful amongst his contemporaries of the French and other

[1] It is worthy of note that, though various passages of the *Quincuplex Psalterium* are marked out for reprobation in Quiroga (Gaspar, Card. et Archiep. Tolet. Hispan. gener. Inquis.), *Index Librorum Expurg.*, Salmuri, MDCI, the above is not one of them.

nations. But he also interpreted thereby the mind of Savonarola towards the close of that great man's career. For both, the Church of Christ was not a denomination, either racial or sectarian, but a realization of the brotherhood of man. To a certain extent it is true that Lefèvre's ideal found itself, later on, at issue with the strongest current of the age. Nationalities, in the modern sense, were springing into existence and trying their strength, and national tendencies in religion were destined to furnish a powerful impetus to the reformation movement. Still, the fact remained that nationalism was not the highest ideal in religion as Lefèvre discerned it. Indeed, it seems likely enough that this remarkable French Christian never could have comprehended the essence of the modern claim, however fundamentally true, that a National Church can constitute an independent part of the Universal or Catholic Church.[1] It is also very probable that the development of this conception of Church polity in the closing decade of his life, confused him and repelled him from active co-operation with others disposed to entertain it, whilst his sympathies were largely with their efforts towards reform.

It is worth pointing out here that this Catholic instinct, so strongly present in one who was at once a sincere friend of reform and a pioneer in critical studies, as he understood them, brings Lefèvre into a kinship strangely close with those great French scholars and critics of to-day whose general attitude towards Church unity is on the whole so similar. We wonder, sometimes impatiently, why the "Modernists" do not leave the communion of Rome: their steadfastness is attributed sometimes, it is to be feared, to unworthy motives. But the lesson from their life as well as from Lefèvre's is surely that a passion for sincerity and truth in religious teaching and practice does not necessarily

[1] Even his philosophical studies were undertaken for the good of the Church considered as a Catholic entity.—See Delaruelle, p. 53.

involve, and can be maintained quite apart from, that tendency to "split" which has disintegrated and weakened the Churches of the Reformation.

How far the considerable body of ardent admirers who gathered around Lefèvre assimilated the ideas on religion and cognate matters that were familiar to him is not easy to ascertain. His caution, his dread of rash enterprises,[1] withheld him most usually from expressing himself with the bold emphasis required to inspire disciples. That the general principles of Christian morality enunciated by him were listened to, and had powerful influence over their minds, can be readily seen in many ways.[2] But his own distinctive opinions remained almost entirely hidden in his heart and only appeared in rare outbursts until comparatively late in his life-time. His position as a religious teacher in regard to the University of Paris was in every respect similar to Colet's at Oxford, and what has been already said of the state of biblical studies amongst the academics of the English University might be nearly repeated concerning the French. The University of Paris and the Theological Faculty (the Sorbonne) clung to their mediævalism with tenacity, and both, but especially the latter—being dominated almost entirely by the friars—accentuated their desire for the maintenance of traditions already grown obsolete.[3] The type of theology in favour with these persons was that taught in the College of Montaigu under John Standonée, or Standonck, which has been rendered famous by several

[1] Graf, p. 13. Erasmus to Budaeus: "Faber ille natura mitis ac blandus."—*Op.*, III, 301D, dated (in Leclerc) from Louvain, 22nd Feb., 1518.

[2] Delaruelle, p. 54: "Par son enseignement et par ses écrits il a sans nul doute exercé une influence très notable, mais dont on ne saurait dire qu'elle fut bonne de tous points."

[3] Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, V, 145: "Mais l'Université et la Sorbonne, qui auraient dû être au premier rang des réformateurs, s'attardaient dans de vieilles formules ou dans des querelles misérables de privilèges, ne songeaient qu'à défendre leurs prérogatives, et s'unissaient aux ordres religieux animés du même égoïsme."

remarkable particulars: the complaints and irony of Erasmus in one of his colloquies named *Ichthyophagia* (Fish-diet), wherein, amongst other censures, he declares that the very walls cogitated on theology;[1] and the gibes of Rabelais, who, however, made Erasmus's censures his own, for he himself had no experience of this College.[2] Standonck appears to have been an upright and honourable, if rather austere and ascetic, man, and to have befriended Erasmus at a time when he needed a friend badly.[3] Some years later John Calvin was educated at this College.[4] The unending trivialities over which Erasmus yawned in this stronghold of Scotistic theology cannot have been less distasteful to Lefèvre, but they represented the intellectual food of no small part of those with whom he came in contact. With their disputations he had no sympathy; but, on the other hand, their arguments and exercises created for him no offence. The latter were, in fact, outside the scope of his contemplation. But in a truly evangelical spirit he felt impelled to urge, whilst not attempting designedly to controvert the official theology or theological definitions of his time, the supreme importance to every Christian of a study of Holy Scripture :—

> I have frequently visited monasteries, but those persons I found ignorant of this delight I considered entirely unaware of the true food for the mind. For, Spirits live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, and what are those words[5] but divine utterances? Therefore men of that kind have dead spirits. And from the time in which pious studies ceased monasteries have perished, devotion vanished,

[1] *Colloq. Desid. Eras. Rot.* (London, 1676), p. 307. Erasmus, in an ep. of 1497 to Thomas Grey, gives an amusing but condemnatory description of the theology he means.—*Op.*, III, 76D-77F.

[2] Nisard, p. 20; Fleury (Jean), *Rabelais et ses œuvres*, Paris, 1877, I, 259.

[3] Nichols, I, 27, 104-7, 272, 309.

[4] Beza, *Life of Calvin*, in *Calvin's Tracts*, etc., trans. by Beveridge (1844), p. xxi.

[5] *I.e.*, Holy Scripture.

religion became extinct, spiritual things have been given up for earthly—heaven exchanged for earth—an unhappy sort of trading.

No doubt he had amongst his admirers and pupils, in those days before he came to reside in the Abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, many such as Matthew Rigman Philesius who devoted his mental powers to the eager pursuit only of the instructions Lefèvre gave in secular learning. Others, like Beatus Rhenanus, while imitating Philesius, imbibed perhaps no inconsiderable portion of the master's spirit in things religious. Some, however, probably never very numerous, though men of that stamp who leave the impress of their character upon their own and succeeding generations, were at this stage his zealous and enthusiastic adherents. Prominent amongst these were Briçonnet and Farel, already named, Gérard Roussel, Michel d'Arande, and Clichtoue,[1] of whom most drew back, in another decade, like their preceptor, from the Protestant Reformation, because, though keenly anxious for reform, they could not altogether approve of the shape it was assuming. Over these, the power of Lefèvre's gentle, almost apostolic, character extended itself to the full;[2] they thought his thoughts, and some of them, when the

[1] Graf, pp. 13-6, explains the intimacy that existed between Lefèvre and Josse Clichtoue, who came from a district close to Lefèvre's birthplace. It was Clichtoue that introduced him to the Briçonnet family, a service of inestimable value to Lefèvre. See Graf, p. 14, note 24, where the following quotation occurs from the works of Hier. Papiensis: "Quis referat gloriam Clichtovei quae resultat in Fabro, dum ipse vigilias omnes conceptionesque Fabri stylo elegantissimo reponit in scriptis? ut, cum illi in studiis omnibus fidentissimus sit Achates, qui Fabrum diligit ingratissimus, si non amet Clichtoveum."

[2] Clichtoue, in subsequent years, gave a proof of the affection he still bore to his old master. For he was himself an ally of Béda's when that person wrote his book *Against the Clandestine Lutherans*, but suppressed (apparently for Lefèvre's sake) the name of Lefèvre and those of his friends.—Graf, p. 64, and note 204, quoting *Bedae Apologia adv. clandest. Lutheranos*, f. 16: "Ego . . . post Jod. Clichtoveum, qui tamen nominibus in gratiam magistri et per modestiam pepercerat, pauca in confutatione adjeci," etc.

opportunity presented itself, laboured to give effect to his ideals. And there was Budé, the erudite Hellenist, who, if we can rely on the testimony of one who knew him,[1] learned mathematics from Lefèvre. He always evinced a tender and affectionate regard for the philosophic Christian teacher; but he passed from his lectures in philosophy and mathematics into the wider atmosphere of the Classical Renaissance to such an extent that, though retaining enough religious sympathy with him to carp and rail (a procedure the master never countenanced) at the prevalent abuses in ecclesiastical affairs,[2] yet he really failed to comprehend Lefèvre's attitude to these things and the scope of his plans. Nevertheless, when nearly a couple of generations had come and gone, and old age lay upon him heavily, last of that little band which had called the Étaplois preceptor, Budé returned wondrously close to the spirit of his friend and teacher. The humanist, always Christian, now began to be a Christian only, an enlightened one truly who possessed such stores of knowledge, garnered from his profound study of the Ancients and his acquaintance with the original language of the New Testament, as helped to the full understanding of what he read in the sacred pages. Passed from Hellenism to Christianity, from Athens to Calvary, from Hercules to Christ, the one thought uppermost with him is the loving Redeemer. He leads the way to the sources of religion, and he finds them in the Bible. The voice is the voice of Budé, but the words, the thoughts, the religious conceptions, are those of Lefèvre.[3]

[1] Louis Le Roy cited by Dr. Delaruelle, p. 87, who, however, rejects the statement. I am not confident that Delaruelle is right in doing so. See Budé (Eugène de), *Vie de Guillaume Budé*, Paris, 1884, p. 16.

[2] Delaruelle, pp. 181-9.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 194-7: "Le christianisme de Budé, tel qu'il s'y exprime, n'est pas une religion de savant ni de philosophe . . . c'est à la lecture des Écritures que Budé nous ramène . . . il en fait la base et le fondement de l'étude de la sagesse." . . . "C'est un peu l'histoire de Lefèvre d'Étaples et de ses premiers disciples. Le ton de Budé me semble correspondre ici à celui qui régnait parmi eux, avant que l'Église ne se fût mise en travers du mouvement."

CHAPTER V

DEMANDS FOR ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM (1512) BIBLICAL STUDIES AT PARIS AND CAMBRIDGE

LEFÈVRE D'ÉTAPLES once remarked to his pupil, Guillaume Farel: "God will soon renovate the world, and you will live to see it."[1] Whether the Frenchman intended his words for a prophetical utterance or not, it is at least certain that, at the time when he spoke them, namely, in 1512, he was but voicing the desires of many hearts in western Europe. Reform, in fact, was then a topic upon many a tongue: the Pope himself had summoned a Council for the purpose of discussing it. Great were the expectations formed regarding the beneficial changes which would issue from its deliberations. As to the certainty of the Lateran Council being assembled at all there was by no means the same confidence. Suspicions were abroad that when the pretended summons had rendered the schemes of the Cardinals nugatory, the whole project would be abandoned.[2]

But before this important Council met, the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury had assembled in St. Paul's on 6th February: Archbishop Warham had

[1] Goguel (G.), *Histoire de Guillaume Farel*, Montbéliard, 1873, p. 24.

[2] See the correspondence between Erasmus and his friend in London, Ammonius, during 1511-1512, especially the two epp. of the latter given in *Eras. Op.*, III, 111E and 113C (27th October, and 8th November, 1511), and Erasmus's of 19th February, 1512 (Allen, I, 501), in which he reports that he had heard that the royal envoy had been recalled, since the Pope had postponed the General Council to November.

appointed Dean Colet to preach the opening sermon. This notable discourse has been fitly termed, "the overture in the great drama of the English Reformation."[1] It must be acknowledged to have been a fearless pronouncement on behalf of reform—the expression of the Church's mind upon it; in brief, a demand, a challenge, to put right what was wrong and to restore life to an all but dead Christianity. Convocation itself had been summoned to deal with heresy, for this, far from becoming extinct under the strong repressive measures taken against it, had sprung up into new life.[2] Even Ammonius, in a letter of 8th November to Erasmus, had referred contemptuously to the increase of the heretics.[3] In short, a serious condition of affairs had been reached, and some better and more successful plan of action than mere individual efforts was required to meet the occasion. Convocation, therefore, had the task before it of devising some means of stemming the rising tide of revolt. At this juncture, it is true, heresy (*i.e.*, Lollardy) was represented only by the unlearned, uncultured and obscure, as Ammonius's sneer correctly enough indicates. But the Lollards did not, on the one hand, constitute the gravest source of danger to the Church's peace and unity, nor did they, on the other hand, form that ever-increasing body of persons whose criticisms and outspoken censures would have sooner or later to be answered. The Colets, the Mores, the Linacres, Warhams, and Charnocks, and their continental friends, were a very different kind of men from "the brother of my man Thomas." These were they who, without ceasing to be loyal sons of the Church, held opinions about the state of religion which demanded consideration from the chief rulers of the Church.

[1] Lupton, *Colet*, p. 178.

[2] Gairdner, *Lollardy*, I, 275; Seebohm, *Oxford Reformers*, p. 223.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 113B: "Lignorum precium auctum esse non miror, multi quotidie haeretici holocaustum nobis praebent, plures tamen succrescunt: quin et frater germanus mei Thomae, stipes verius quam homo, sectam (diis placet) et ipse instituit et discipulos habet."

And these men did not lack powerful support; they were, in fact, merely the spokesmen of large numbers of their compatriots. So far as England was concerned, most of the bishops and superior dignitaries recognized the need of reform, and they desired, with more or less earnestness, according to their several dispositions, some plan which would bring about an improvement in religious affairs. Wishing and acting are not, however, the same thing, and, consequently, whilst reforms had been frequently mooted, no one dared to lay his finger openly on the sore spots of ecclesiasticism.[1] But when Warham selected Colet to preach the opening sermon of Convocation, he must have forecast the effect of his choice—that the truth would be for once fearlessly uttered. Colet and he had been intimately acquainted with one another for many years, and the character, aspirations, and opinions of each were fully understood and appreciated by the other. Colet was no Lollard. It is true that Lollards came to his sermons in St. Paul's because he preached pure doctrine.[2] He had no sympathy with the Lollard position, and his name, in fact, appears on the list of judges of heretics in the prosecutions of the previous year. For all that, he occasionally interfered in their favour,[3] and not only read their books, but approved of a great amount of what he found therein.[4] Such a man knew that there was a great deal of justification for Lollard and heretical doctrines in the circumstances of the times. When so many abuses existed in the Church, and Gospel teaching had become debased, dissatisfaction and want of real spiritual guidance were bound to send the laity upon a search, sometimes erroneously conducted, after religious truth. If Lollardy and heresy were on the increase,

[1] Archbishop Morton, in a previous generation, had tried, but only with temporary success, to improve the condition of things in the Church of England—Gairdner, *Lollardy*, I, 269-73.

[2] Seebohm, *Oxford Reformers*, p. 222.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 357E.

[4] *Ibid.*, 460A.

the blame fell on the Church who, for all her noble heritage, could not be said to have fulfilled her holy mission. The high ideals of the Dionysian *Hierarchies* differed widely from the realities of the English Church at the commencement of the sixteenth century. All this Colet had seen and felt and pondered. Now his opportunity had come for plain speaking in the ears of the Church. To a Convocation assembled to cope with heresy outside the "men of the Church," he boldly affirmed the necessity of conducting the improvement of affairs from within.

Entering the pulpit, he began[1]:—

> Ye are come to gether to daye, fathers and ryghte wyse men to entre councell: in the whiche, what ye wyll do, and what matters ye wyll hondell, yet we understande nat. But we wysshe, that ones remembring your name and profession, ye wold mynde the reformation of the churches matter. For hit was neuer more nede. And the state of the churche dyd neuer desyre more youre endeuours. For the spouse of Christe, the churche, whom ye wolde shulde be without spotte or wryncle, is made foule and euyll fauored, as saith Esaias: *The faithfull cite is made an harlotte*; and as saythe Hieremias: *She hath done lechery with many louers*: wherby she hath conceiued many sedes of wyckednes, and dayly bryngethe forthe uery foule frute. Wherfore I came hyther to daye fathers, to warne you, that of this your councell, with all your mynde, ye thinke upon the reformation of the churche.

He announced his text from the Epistle to the Romans:—

> Be you not conformed to this worlde: but be you reformed in the newnes of your understandynge, that

[1] The Latin sermon is given in the forefront of the App. by Knight, *Colet*, pp. 239-50. This is followed immediately by an old English translation, printed the same year (1512) by Thomas Berthelet, the King's Printer. As it is supposed to have been made by Colet himself the extracts from the sermon quoted above are taken from this version.

> ye may proue what is the good wyll of God well pleasing and perfect.

These words Colet assumed as addressed "most chiefly unto pristes and bysshops."

He divided his text into two parts, in its application to the clergy: conformation and reformation.

Conformation to the world he interpreted as resting principally in four things—devilish pride, carnal concupiscence, worldly covetousness, secular business, all which he maintained were to be found "in the churche and men of the churche."

Many ecclesiastics sought high dignities with eagerness, and when they obtained them became proud and haughty, forgetting—

> that the maistry in the churche is none other thynge than a ministration: and the hygh dignitie in a man of the churche to be none other thing than a meke seruice.

According to him, the second evil, carnal concupiscence, was one which had grown to unusual and lamentable proportions.

The third evil, covetousness, roused him to a passionate outburst against the corruptness of the ecclesiastical courts and the greed of the clergy.[1]

Under the fourth head, Colet spoke on an even more effective and personal subject, viz., the secular occupations of the clergy. From this evil of the clergy's association with secular business arose great misfortune to the priesthood and the Church. The laity, too, when they beheld the clergy abandon their spiritual duties and occupy themselves with earthly things, were thereat scandalized and suffered spiritual injury.[2]

[1] His words of censure are not stronger than those of Erasmus. The terseness of the humanist's denunciations increases their pungency and imparts to them an acrid humour which is absent from the Dean's reproofs. Erasmus, indeed, declared that the priests would do nothing unless they got a fee, since they were obsessed by a passion for gain.—*Adagia*, *Eras. Op.*, II, 338A-F.

[2] Fox and Wolsey were among the auditory. As to the former, he

Colet, having concluded his discourse upon the first portion of his text, proceeded to the second—to the subject of reformation.

In demanding ecclesiastical reform, he advised no promulgation of new laws. There were laws enough, if only they were obeyed. Let the laws already in existence be rehearsed and put in force. The first ordinances that ought to be rendered effective were those directed against easy admittance into holy orders. Holiness and uprightness of life should be reckoned the chief requisites in a candidate. Then ought to follow the laws that would bestow benefices upon worthy priests. From lack of observance of these regulations

> hit happenethe nowe a dayes that boyes for olde men, fooles for wise men, euyll for good do reigne and rule.

The decrees against simony, non-residence, unworthy behaviour and haunting of taverns; the statutes which regulated the conduct of monks, canons, and religious men; the ordinances which governed the election of bishops, and appointed that they must reside in their respective dioceses, that they must fulfil the pastoral and fatherly oversight of their people, and dispose worthily of the emoluments of their office—all these laws should be rehearsed and put in execution. The amendment of the ecclesiastical courts was one of the matters dear to the heart of Colet, who, at this singular opportunity, did not fail to urge it upon the attention of Convocation. He passed from the thought of the Church courts to the great assemblies in which the mind of the Universal Church can be most fittingly expressed, and asserted that the frequent convention

has been described as a "typical example of the clerical statesman of his time."—Nichols, I, 391. In the words of Colet above referred to, there seems a premonitory echo of the historic exclamation of the renowned Wolsey when he lay dying at Leicester—Galt, *Wolsey*, p. 197.

of provincial councils for the correction of defects in the Church was greatly to be desired.[1]

He had spoken, he said, of the reformation only as it had to do with the clergy, because

> the clergies and spiritual part ones reformed in the churche, than may we with a iuste order procede to the reformation of the lay parte: the which truely wyll be verye easy to do: if we fyrst be reformed.

He therefore ended his sermon with a candid exhortation to the present assembly of ecclesiastics:—

> Suffre nat fathers, this your so greatte a gatherynge to departe in vayne. Suffre nat this your congregation to slyppe for naughte. Truly ye are gethered often tymes to gether (but by youre fauoure to speke the trouth) yet I se nat what frute cometh of your assemblyng, namely to the churche. Go ye nowe in the Spirite that ye haue called on, that by the helpe of hit, ye maye in this your councell fynd out, decerne, and ordeyne, those thynges that may be profitable to the churche, prayse vnto you, and honour vnto God. Unto whom be all honoure and glorye, for euermore. Amen.

It was bravely spoken. The sermon was printed and circulated in Latin and English during the same year,[2] and thus addressed a much more numerous auditory than that before which it was originally delivered. If the statements contained in it had been unfounded or untrue, ample amends could have been demanded of Colet for the general accusations he had uttered. But, beyond all question, examples of simony, evil life, taverning and rioting, promotions for services rendered in diplomacy and other purely secular business, corruption in the courts, scandalous pluralities, and many

[1] "There neuer hapneth nothyng more hurtefull to the churche of Christ, than the lacke both of councell general and prouinciall." This was the common opinion of the age, although opposed by the curialists. It is worthy of notice that it was Luther's attitude towards General Councils which decided the Diet of Worms against him.

[2] Knight, *Colet*, pp. 160, 174; Seebohm, p. 250.

other abuses, existed in far too large a number to admit of the possibility of an assault upon the accuracy of Colet's incriminations.

A few months later, in May, 1512, the much desired General Council at length assembled in the Lateran. On 3rd May a noble procession of cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, and famous doctors, besides illustrious princes and ambassadors, accompanied Julius II to the opening ceremony. There seemed now to be a prospect that those reforms which all good Christian men were praying for would be seriously taken in hand. With the intention of explaining the nature of the hopes that existed throughout Christendom, Aegidius of Viterbo, the learned General of the Augustinian Order, ascended the pulpit and preached a sermon quite as bold as Colet's, though he garnished it with eloquent trope and apostrophe, and expressed his meaning in guarded language. Yet the dominant note of both discourses was the same—correction of abuses should begin within the ecclesiastical body. Even Colet's eagerness for the frequent convention of Councils found an echo in the oration of Aegidius[1]; the same insistent adjuration of their hearers to accomplish the work of reform was present in both utterances.

And thus the Augustinian General began :—

> For well-nigh twenty years, so far as I was able and my slender powers allowed me, I have been expounding to almost the whole of Italy the Gospels, the prophetical books, and the Revelation of John concerning the triumph of the Church. Very often I have declared that those who were listening to me would behold tremendous commotions and disasters in the Church, and then, after a while, would observe her correction.[2] It now appears suitable that he who

[1] "Whenever there has been a suspension of councils the Church has been deserted by her Divine Bridegroom and the words of the Gospel have been fulfilled, 'Yet a little while, and ye shall not see Me.'"—Labb. et Coss., Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1672, tom. XIV, 21A.

[2] These words are more than reminiscent of Savonarola, inasmuch as

used to declare that these things would happen should bear witness to them when they have occurred, and that he who so often cried, "Mine eyes shall see the times of salvation," should, on this present occasion, exclaim: "Mine eyes have seen the salutary and holy beginning of the longed-for restoration." Only be thou here, oh Renovator of the world, Offspring of a Divine Father, Saviour and Redeemer of mortal men! and grant to me the power to speak, to my speech the power to move, and to the fathers, here assembled, the power to celebrate, not with words but in fact, this true, holy, long-demanded council, so that they may eradicate blemishes, stimulate uprightness, remove the foxes which, in these days, swarm forth to destroy the holy vineyard, and may at length bring back religion (now in a ruinous condition) to its ancient purity, to its former brightness, to its natural glory, and to the true source of its origin.[1]

The preacher classified the many defects and abuses in the Church under general heads, interspersing his censures with quotations from Scripture and the early Fathers of the Church. Earnestness, indignation, and grief, alternated in the oration, as the impassioned speaker strove to kindle a zeal for amendment in the hearts of his influential auditors, and pleaded the necessity of it. Towards the close of his sermon he inveighed against the use of carnal weapons for the support of the Church's cause and authority; he recalled Christendom to a completer dependence on the Divine Ruler and to a more adequate performance of His will.[2]

Debates upon the topic, which formed the basis of all this oratory, occurred before a few sessions of the Lateran Council, notably the ninth, when a temporary movement towards the important task of remedying

they serve to prove that, at the very time the great Dominican was admonishing the Florentines, another beside him was delivering the same message in precisely the same form: a scourge sent by God, followed by a renovation effected through a council.

[1] Labb. et Coss., XIV, 20A, B. [2] *Ibid.*, 25C-27A.

flagrant abuses took place. But the one particular session which will always attract the meditative, or perhaps we ought to say, the student of the prophetic in history, is the twelfth, on account of a remarkable incident that happened during it. We allude to the presentation to the Pope by J. F. Pico della Mirandola (the nephew of Savonarola's ardent follower, and himself the Dominican's apologist) of an *Oratio de Reformandis Moribus*,[1] in which he advised the pontiff to prosecute the work of cleansing the Church lest God Himself punish her for her iniquities.

With this session concluded the Lateran Council. It finished its deliberations in March, 1517, at a juncture which, in the light of after events, was not without grave significance.[2]

To all intents and purposes the two singular demands for reform in 1512 were answered in the same way: possessing other points of resemblance, they were alike also in their consequences. The Convocation of Canterbury and the General Council at the Lateran achieved the real, not the avowed, objects of their convention; in the former case, a royal subsidy from the clergy and some increased activity against heretics; in the latter, the overthrow of the Cardinals' Council. Then they passed, amidst many solemnities and ceremonies, into oblivion.

Shortly after the delivery of his great sermon, Colet withdrew into the rural district of Stepney, where his mother resided, and thence he wrote, probably in February, 1512,[3] to Erasmus, telling him of a laughable incident that had taken place:—

> A certain bishop (so I have heard), and he one ranked among the wiser sort, reviled our school in a

[1] This document is given in full by Roscoe (T.), *Leo X*, Liverpool, 1805, III, App. CXLVI.

[2] Prof. Kraus of Munich in *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, II, 31.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1792-3. Allen (*Erasmi Epp.*, I, 508) dates this letter March, not February, 1512. The difference in time is not of importance here. Possibly it was written in March.

large assembly, and said that I had established a useless thing, yea, even—to quote his own words—a house of idolatry. I fancy he said that because the Poets are taught there. I am not angry at this kind of thing, Erasmus. It only excites my laughter.[1]

As the summer of this year advanced the hostility against Colet increased. Troubles, indeed, of many kinds were weighing upon him. His calm and gentle temper, usually so well guarded, began to betray some tokens of impatience. Accordingly, Erasmus forwarded to him, about 11th July, 1512, a letter in which he strove to allay the Dean's irritability[2]:—

Peace of mind is truly the greatest of all good things. And those perplexities of thine are the companions of riches. Meanwhile, present an upright and true conscience to the prattle of the ill-disposed, and devote thyself to the one unchanging Christ, and the inconstant world will vex thee less. But why do I, the Pig, instruct thee, Minerva,[3] and I, myself, the patient, undertake to heal thee, the physician? Fare thee well, excellent teacher. Cambridge, 11 July.

I have completed the collation of the New Testament, and am now taking up Jerome. When I have finished him I will return to thee. . . .

Undoubtedly, the greater part of the vexations referred to above as coming upon Colet arose from the collection and allocation of the funds necessary for the building and endowment of his school, and such-like matters. But these pressed upon him all the more

[1] With this ep. Colet sent Erasmus "the little book which contained the sermon"—very likely the Convocation Sermon.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 107c, D. Allen, I, 525-8, dates it 1513, but he does not feel confident about it. He surmises that the reference to the *castigatio* of the New Testament being finished ought to put this ep. subsequent to September, 1512. I have, however, on other grounds, retained it as belonging to July, 1512.

[3] "Sus Minervam docet, indoctus docet sapientem"—Facciolati, Bailey's edit., London, 1828, quoting *Cic. Acad.* and *De Orat.* Bailey gives as the corresponding English phrase: "To teach his grandmother to chew cheese."

sorely because his enemies were energetically seeking to compass his undoing.

The " laughable incident " Colet related to Erasmus was almost certainly no isolated affair. He had received warning from his friend, Thomas More, that the school would be regarded as a kind of Greek Horse[1] wherein lurked many perils for the citadel of ignorance, that, in fact, the institution was sure to awaken an outburst of malice. The prophecy had already attained fulfilment.

Nevertheless, the school was not the only cause of animosity against the Dean. He had spoken more than once too kindly of the heretics—a dangerous thing to do in that epoch. His sermons, too, attracted the Lollards in search of evangelical teaching ; these men found food for their souls when the Dean occupied the pulpit. And he had now, by setting forth the naked details in his Convocation Sermon, drawn the attention of the public to the corrupt practices in the Church and the true causes of the depraved state of religion. He had added the open declaration that the ill-behaved clergy were the worst kind of heretics. Here truly lay ample grounds for hostility. Over and above these, however, there were many private reasons for malice. Some members of the Cathedral Chapter,[2] some of his fellow-clergy and of the superior ecclesiastics nourished personal grudges against him. Dr. FitzJames, his bishop, had never been on friendly terms with Colet, and this powerful dignitary became the centre of the disaffection directed against the Dean.

Accordingly, some time in the months subsequent to the Convocation of 1512, perhaps during the autumn of that year, his adversaries succeeded in collecting

[1] Stapleton, *Tres Thomae*, etc., edit. 1612, p. 166 : " De qua schola sic in quadam ad eum epistola Morus. Neque valde miror si clarissimae scholae tuae rumpantur invidia. Vident enim uti ex equo Troiano prodierunt Graeci, qui barbaram diruere Troiam, sic è tua prodire schola qui ipsorum arguunt atque subvertunt inscitiam."

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 460c.

charges against him sufficient, as they imagined, for their purpose. FitzJames, supported by two other bishops, brought Colet to trial before the Primate on three counts, firstly, that he had taught that images were not to be adored, secondly, that he had given a false interpretation of our Lord's injunction to St. Peter, *Feed My sheep*, and thirdly, that Colet had made a public attack on his diocesan (Dr. FitzJames) by criticizing his manner of preaching. Archbishop Warham quashed the proceedings.[1]

Fresh opportunities soon after presented themselves to the Dean's adversaries. Twice Colet preached on warfare, once towards the end of 1512, about the time of the unsuccessful English expedition into Fontarabia,[2] and again, a few months later, on Good Friday, 27th March, 1513. On the second occasion, he preached before King Henry himself and his Court, in the Royal Chapel, on the eve of an expedition against France, which the King had decided to conduct in person. The death of Pope Julius and the elevation of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici to the Papacy, as Leo X, revived hopes in many quarters that a European peace would ensue.[3] With these new-born expectations of peace uppermost in his mind, Colet spoke on the Victory of Christ—a subject that inspired him with forceful earnestness. Those wicked men, he said, who fight with other wicked men, through hatred or ambition, and who slaughter one another in turn, serve not under the banner of Christ, but under that of the devil. They seldom undertake war except when urged to it by covetousness or animosity. Christians should imitate Christ, their Prince, rather than Juliuses or Alexanders.[4]

[1] *Ibid.*, 460C-E. [2] Hume, *Hist. of England*, III, 419-22.

[3] "Julius, a Pontiff by no means esteemed of all, could arouse this storm of war, but will it be impossible for Leo, a learned, upright and pious man, to assuage it?"—Erasmus to Antony of Bergen, Abbot of St. Bertin, ep. dated by Nichols and Allen 14th March, 1514, *Eras. Op.*, III, 123-4.

[4] *Ibid.*, 461B: "Addidit, ut Christum Principem suum imitarentur

Colet's enemies were not slow to grasp the chances afforded them by his indiscreet utterances.[1] They endeavoured to stir up the King and the people against him, but unsuccessfully. Henry, on both occasions, sent for the preacher, and was completely satisfied with the explanations given by the Dean. After the second interview had taken place, and Colet had retired, the King proclaimed, in unequivocal terms, the high esteem which he entertained for him.[2]

The perils that surrounded Colet at this period are not here exaggerated. They were still alluded to as within the public remembrance long after Colet was dead.[3] But whatever were the hostilities which the year 1513 had brought to him at its beginning, it seemed likely to terminate in comparative peacefulness. The friendship of the King could not prevent, no doubt, the frequent occurrence of petty persecutions, but it had effectually disarmed the greater. Accordingly, Erasmus was able, by 31st October,[4] to congratulate him on the return of tranquillity.

Whilst expectations of reform occupied the minds of those who were interested in the proceedings of the Lateran Council, two scholars were quietly pursuing a task calculated eventually to contribute far more than the deliberations of the Council to the solution of the problems therein debated. Lefèvre d'Étaples, in the hope that his prophecy would be fulfilled by the acts

potius, quam Julios et Alexandros"—an obvious hit at the two late popes, Alexander VI and Julius II. See Lupton, *Colet*, p. 190, and cp. also the sentiment of Vettori, the Florentine: "Alexander and Julius were so great that they may be called Emperors rather than Popes" in Creighton, V, 190.

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 460F-461A.

[2] *Ibid.*, 461D: "Ibi Rex omnibus audientibus, *Suus*, inquit, *cuique doctor esto, et suo quisque faveat, hic est doctor meus.*"

[3] Tyndale, *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, etc., Parker Soc. Pub., Camb., 1850, pp. 167-8; Hugh Latimer (*Sermons*, Parker Soc. Pub., 1844), p. 440, alludes to the time when Colet would have been burnt, if the King had not stood his friend.

[4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 101B-D; see Allen, I, 536

of the Council, had been working at a Commentary on the Pauline Epistles.[1] It is worthy of note that at this period of his life he made no appeal to the Christian laity. As his works were written, not in the vernacular, but in Latin, they could only have been intended by him for the student and the cleric—in other words, for the educated. The desire was strong in him that the cleric, imbued with the spirit of the Prophet, the Apostle, and the Evangelist, and responding in some measure to the wish of his Lord, would make known to the people the divine truth as it is revealed in Holy Scripture. To aid reform, so far as an extension of the Bible could effect it, was the sole object of Lefèvre's labours. It was a serious task, beset with many difficulties and some danger, but one fascinating and delightful to him, engrossing his whole being. No one, indeed, can help observing, even from the most cursory perusal of the Dedicatory Preface (addressed to his pupil and patron, Guillaume de Briçonnet, Bishop of Lodève), that Lefèvre believed himself called upon by the Holy Spirit to perform the work as a duty which he owed to Him from Whom the light had come to himself. One pauses here to remark the consciousness of a divine power impelling the worker to the accomplishment of a particular undertaking,[2] which penetrated the mind of Lefèvre, and, in all certainty, also that of Colet, who, if the matter had come before him for notice, would have confessed to a like impulse. Lefèvre, in fact, gives us the clue to much that would otherwise be inexplicable in the lives of those who endeavoured, during the first decades of the sixteenth

[1] It appears that Lefèvre, subsequent to the publication of the *Quincuplex Psalterium*, made a journey into Germany for the purpose of this Commentary—Herminjard, I, 4; Graf, p. 18, "Er hielt sich in Juli dieses Jahres (1509) in Mainz auf, besuchte viele Klöster am Rhein, und ging auch zu den Brüdern des gemeinschaftlichen Lebens in Cöln."

[2] *Epistola . . . Gvillermo Briconneto Episcopo Lodovensi, ā.i.*, in *Epistole diui Pauli apostoli. ℑ. F. Stapulen.*, Parrhisiis in edibus F. Regnault et Joannis de la Porte, 1517.

century, to effect desirable changes in the religious ideals and practices of their contemporaries. He, indeed, reveals the motive-power; we can easily declare the object aimed at. For instance, Lefèvre admonishes Briçonnet, when reading the Epistles of St. Paul, to look away from the apostolic writer to the Master Who had dictated the writing, and likewise, when perusing the present Commentary, to have regard neither to the writer of it nor to the actual letter written, but to Him Who had directed its performance. The words are explicit. They depict a vision of God presiding over all departments of human erudition, and, by the agency of His own afflatus, imparting real value and power to the efforts of human genius. They recognize the impossibility of a noble thing being conceived, a noble thing done, for humanity apart from the conscious, or unconscious, motion of divine energy.[1] As a consequence of such an over-mastering idea Lefèvre employs words concerning his own enterprise which might be capable of misconstruction into a claim to inspiration, if the train of his thoughts were not carefully observed. Defined, however, as Lefèvre has exhibited it, few will be found to deny the essential truth of the concept.

In his work on the Pauline Epistles, Lefèvre once more assumed the double rôle of textual critic and exegete. As a work of criticism this later production is a distinct advance upon his Psalter, and a similar decision can be arrived at in reference to its value as a commentary. His knowledge of Greek, however, was

[1] *Ibid.*, ā.ij. There is something akin to this in *Colet's Lectures on Romans*, Lupton's edit., pp. 43-6. At the same time, the words of M. Berger, *La Bible au Seizième Siècle*, p. 29, must not be forgotten, since Lefèvre—and others—cannot have been unaffected by the opinions of their predecessors in this matter: "Nous voyons, bien au contraire, plusieurs auteurs représenter Dieu, par manière de parler, comme l'auteur de leurs propres livres, dans les mêmes termes où ils lui attribuent les livres saints. L'idée, universelle au moyen âge, que l'Église avait l'autorité de Dieu même, devait mettre sur un même pied de respect et de créance un grand nombre de livres, de décrets et de canons de conciles."

faulty, and therefore in certain passages he has incurred censures which he would have thoroughly deserved if the means of showing greater discrimination had been within his reach. But we feel confident that, when the circumstances of his life, the bent of his deliberations, and the qualities of his character, are reckoned up, his performance will not be found, to any extent, despicable. Before we sit in judgment upon Lefèvre's work, we should recall to mind certain particular facts: textual criticism, as we know it, was then totally unthought of as a science in itself; no rules to guide the critic had yet been formulated; creditable manuscripts were not easily available, and to those which were at hand the relative values had not yet been assigned. In addition to these considerations, we must not forget that one who wrote under the shadow of the Sorbonne, in those days, had to exercise an incalculable amount of caution, for, impatient as that body ever was of papal demands and encroachments, it retained still the spirit which had animated its representatives at the Council of Constance when these had taken part in the condemnation of John Huss. And, again, it is matter for reasonable doubt if Lefèvre, in this Commentary on the Pauline Epistles, any more than in his Quincuple Psalter, proposed to himself as his prime objective the emendation of the Latin text. One can indeed go further and assert, in the assurance that his Preface will prove it beyond question, that he held the correction of the text to be necessary only so far as it had to do with the enforcement of the divine counsels. With him exegesis took first place; textual criticism was entirely a side-issue owing its existence to the requirement of a comparatively pure text for purposes of exposition. Moreover, the expositions he advanced were such as might have come from one whose entire concern with the religious ignorance and the iniquities of the age was the introduction of the saving knowledge of divine truth.[1]

[1] *Epistola. . . Gvill. Bric.*, ā.ij., *in fine.*

To put it briefly, he was a critic only because an expounder; an innovator only because a teacher; a reprover only because a preacher of holiness. He was neither a revolutionist as regarded the prevalent theology, nor a pedant as regarded the intellectual depravity of his time, nor a satirist as regarded the failings of his contemporaries. Before he began his biblical labours, Colet had expounded the Scriptures and Erasmus had edited the *Annotations* of Laurentius Valla on the Latin text. But then, the former had not delivered his expositions to the printer: if he had ever contemplated doing so he would have become aware of the necessity of scrutinizing the text; and the latter had published a work which was of interest only to the learned and had no direct connection with the seeker after righteousness. Lefèvre endeavoured to combine both, but at the same time took care to give the place of prominence to the expository teaching.

The Commentary on the Epistles is regarded, in the light of subsequent events, as of supreme importance.[1] Unquestionably, the historical worth of the book does not lie in the revision of the text which Lefèvre made from the Ancient Latin (the version St. Jerome himself corrected), but in the independence of the comments. Here, indeed, we observe the truth of the assertion that, in his work, as in his labours upon Aristotle, Lefèvre was a pioneer. Commentators before him had confined themselves to a beaten track, stepping in the footprints of their predecessors. Passing by them all, he struck out a distinct course for himself.

In his Quincuple Psalter he cites no modern authority; he follows the same plan here. Of the ancient

[1] Dr. Delaruelle, alluding primarily to this Commentary, says: "Lefèvre, by his exegetical works, hastened the Reformation"—*Guill. Budé*, p. 54. M. Herminjard constituted the Preface of this Commentary the starting-point of his *Correspondance des Réformateurs*.

fathers he mentions only such as SS. Chrysostom and Theophylact. He appears to owe something to Origen,[1] but whether directly or indirectly it is impossible to say, since he makes no allusion to him. From the great Bishop of Hippo Lefèvre derives no part of his doctrine ; indeed, one would be inclined to describe his opinions as anti-Augustinian so far are his thoughts removed from the teaching of that renowned Father of the Church, if one were not convinced by an examination of his book that he does not intentionally oppose any Christian teacher whatever. Yet, in expressing his views on Original Sin, Lefèvre enunciated his most pronouncedly anti-Augustinian doctrine : he marked a distinction between potential and actual sin, and maintained that Adam's descendants are born with the former, which in course of time becomes actual.[2] The African father, on the contrary, had laid down the dogma that " original " sin is actual. However, the opinion thus propounded by Lefèvre, though quite as distinct from the Pelagian ideas as from the Augustinian, was not by any means so new as a recent biographer (Dr. Barnaud) imagines. Scholastic theology had advanced another view, not indeed identical in terms with Lefèvre's, but so much akin in meaning as not to be easily distinguished from

[1] Lefèvre contrasts the universality of Adam's offence with the vaster universality of Christ's righteousness : " Et iustitia Christi longe vniuersalior : quanto capacitas coeli amplior est quam terrae angustia. est enim peccatum Ade vt tota terra : iustitia Christi vt coeli amplitudo "—Com. in Rom. v, 12, f. 80B, ed. Hen. Stephani, 1512 ; fo. LXIIII, ed. 1517. Origen (*Contra Cels.*), though in a different way, expresses the same notion: "Nullus profecto malus affectus est animi, quo verbum Dei non sit potentius."

Colet is very close in thought to Lefèvre : " Wherefore we must believe that grace, which reconciles to God, has far more power in the world than sin, which estranges from God "—*Lect. on Rom.*, p. 10. Probably the similarity comes from their acquaintance with Origen's dictum.

[2] Commentariorum Liber I, cap. VII, fo. LXVII, vo. (Rom. vii, 14). Unless otherwise stated, the edition referred to in these notes is *Epistole diui Pauli apostoli*, etc., Parrhisiis, 1517.

it, viz., that the sin of Adam is imputed to his descendant.[1]

The cardinal doctrine of Justification by Faith only, so important in its effects upon the rest of Christian dogmas, is asserted by Lefèvre without hesitation and in numerous passages. But, added he, "Neither Faith nor Works justify; they only prepare for justification."[2]

In his endeavour to determine the proper function of the free-will in man, he displays, even more than anywhere else, his anxiety to maintain a *via media*. In one passage he appears to remove the free-will from the sphere of righteous action,[3] expressing himself against the opinion that the human will has an unfettered operation, but he corrected the balance by his comments in other passages.[4]

Lefèvre assigned such importance to faith as the necessary conditions for receiving the benefits of Christ's Atonement that his opinions regarding the ordinances of the Church could not but be affected by it. Accordingly, we notice that he insisted, with marked explicitness, upon the requirement of faith to render valid the Sacrament of Baptism.[5] This plainness of speech vanishes almost entirely when he comes to treat of any other sacrament; yet the inference remains that what he expressed concerning one he

[1] Hook (Dean W. F.), *Church Dictionary*, London, 1852, *sub voce* "Original Sin."

[2] Com. Lib. I, cap. III, fo. LIX, vo. (Rom. iii, 28); and Lib. III, cap. V, fo. CXI (2 Cor. v, 16). For his opinion on the possibility of the unbelieving heathen being saved, provided that, though never hearing of Christ, they have performed all the works of virtue, see Com. Lib. I, cap. II, fo. LVII (Rom. ii, 14).

[3] Com. Lib. VI, cap. II, fo. CXXXVII, vo. (Phil. ii, 13).

[4] Com. Lib. I, cap. IX, fo. LXXII (Rom. ix, 14, 19). Graf, p. 36 n., remarks: "Von der anselmischen Versöhnungslehre ist bei Faber keine Rede." For Anselm's theory, consult the Bohlen Lectures of Dr. G. C. Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement*, London, 1908, an excellent handbook which deals with the subject fully.

[5] Com. Lib. I, cap. IIII, fo. LXII (Rom. iv, 9).

intended with respect to all, and some words of his seem to justify this conclusion.

As we have already pointed out, Lefèvre brought with him from his birth-place conservative views regarding piety and practical religion. And now, in his *Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles*, he displays them in combination with an entire adoption of the Pauline doctrine of the worthlessness of works for obtaining justification. Accordingly, whilst asserting that acts of penitence cannot justify, or satisfy for sin,[1] he assigns to them a distinct value in the service of piety but hastens to advise the penitent to look only to God in a truly repentant spirit.[2]

In his expression of opinion on Penances, with which the theory of Indulgences is connected, Lefèvre, as M. Barnaud rightly observes,[3] was merely repeating the views of the great Doctors of former days. But it was, in truth, a very different opinion from that which obtained general acceptance amongst his contemporaries.

Confession he found some worth in, provided it be first addressed to God.[4] Conscious communion with God is thus, according to him, the true source of piety. This thought led on to that of prayer, and required that the latter should be intelligent. Therefore, Lefèvre did not hesitate to maintain that, for the unlearned, prayer ought to be in the vernacular.[5]

The Sacrifice of the Mass, he asserted, is not a true sacrifice, but the memorial of a sacrifice. Beyond this, he said nothing definite in his remarks upon the Holy Eucharist. He inculcated holiness as requisite for it,

[1] Com. Lib. VII, cap. II, fo. CXLIIII, vo. (Col. ii, 16).

[2] *Ibid.*, cap. III, fo. CXLV, vo. (Col. iii, 5).

[3] *Lefèvre d'Étaples*, p. 41.

[4] Iacobi Fabri Stapvlensis Theologi Celeberrimi *Commentarii in epistolas Catholicas*, Coloniae, 1570, pp. 81-3 (Jas. v, 16). This is a much later commentary of Lefèvre's, but it is cited here, to complete the general view of his opinions.

[5] Com. Lib. II, cap. XIIII, fo. CI (1 Cor. xiv, 16).

but that is only what we might expect of him; he manifested exalted ideas of its spiritual significance and value, but that is in strict agreement with the opinions he expressed upon Baptism. He added, nevertheless, several particulars which appear to make it plain that, concerning this sacrament, he entertained no views divergent from those of his contemporaries.[1]

Lefèvre controverted the common idea that the monastic and ascetic life was the superior. Men can serve Christ as well outside as inside convents.[2] Those who live in convents should not live idly, for SS. Paul, Timothy, and Barnabas gave counsel to that effect, and they were holy.[3] He recognized a certain amount of pre-eminence in the celibate life, but he adopted St. Paul's reason for the superiority, viz., the greater usefulness to the Church of the unmarried man.[4] In fact, he intimated that the Church retained the more truly apostolical custom of permitting the clergy to marry once until the time of Pope Gregory VII.[5]

In his doctrine of the Church he once more emphasized in these Commentaries, though after a different manner, the thought which we have seen already to be so prominent in his earlier work on the Psalms, that Catholicity is a quality inherent in the very being of Christ's Church.[6] Whatever breaks the unity of the Church forms a sect, a heresy.[7]

Some slight differences of opinion existed between Dean Colet and Lefèvre; but the points in which they agreed were much more numerous and important than those in which they differed. Colet, in his

[1] Com. Lib. XIIII, cap. VII, fo. CXCIII; Lib. II, cap. XII, fo. XCVII vo.; Lib. XII, cap. I, fo. CLXXII (Heb. vii, 27, 1 Cor. xi, 23, Tit. i).

[2] Com. Lib. II, cap. I, fo. LXXXIIII (1 Cor. i, 10).

[3] Com. Lib. VIII, cap. IIII, fo. CLI (1 Thess. iv, 11).

[4] Com. Lib. II, cap. VII, fo. XCI (1 Cor. vii, 8).

[5] Com. Lib. X, cap. III, fo. CLIX vo. (1 Tim. iii, 2).

[6] Com. Lib. V, cap. II, fo. CXXIX vo.; Lib. II, cap. I, fo. LXXXIIII (Ephes. ii, 11-22, 1 Cor, i, 10).

[7] Com. Lib. VI, cap. III, fo. CXXXIX (Phil. iii, 15).

Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, published for the first time a generation ago, makes exceedingly few clear statements on the dogmas of Christian theology or on the efficacy and operation of the sacraments, with the single exception of Justification by Faith only,[1] in the one, and Baptism in the other. It is far otherwise with Lefèvre. A system of theology might almost be drawn from the utterances of the latter. Yet his system would fail to possess distinct outlines; his doctrines, in fact, lack the precision which, during later times, was given to theological definitions by the conflicting parties among Christians. Nevertheless, a fundamental idea is common to the teaching of both Colet and his French contemporary—the necessity of a spiritual principle in the heart of man to the validity, in the sight of God, of his outward acts. However they may disagree in some particulars it is abundantly evident that they had drunk at the same fountain.

On Original Sin, Colet seems to have held a view not dissimilar from Lefèvre's;[2] in regard to Baptism his ideas were identical.[3]

The Dean insisted quite as strongly upon the advisability of the penitent in Confession addressing himself to God.[4]

His estimate of the monastic life agreed with that

[1] Colet had a strong predilection for St. Augustine—Lupton, *Colet's Lectures on the Romans*, p. xxxix, note 6.

[2] "Infantes baptizati nubeculam originalis injustitiae adventu luminis habent propulsam"—Lupton's edition of Colet's *De Sacramentis Ecclesiae*, London, 1867, p. 89. Cp. also *Letters to Radulphus*, pp. 135-6.

[3] *De Sacr. Eccl.*, pp. 88-92; *Lett. to Rad.*, pp. 40-3, 116, 122, etc.

[4] *De Sacr. Eccl.*, p. 91. His allusion to the prevalent notions regarding penitential exercises and the common misconceptions of the whole subject takes the form of a vehement and indignant denunciation—*Hierarchies*, pp. 151-2. Erasmus, *Op.* III, 454c, tells us that Jean Vitrier, a pious French Franciscan, uttered a similar judgment: "He used to condemn the false confidence of those who fancied that when their money rattled into the chest, their sins were atoned for."

of the Frenchman, though he inculcated celibacy with less reserve.[1]

Where Colet and Lefèvre were in most complete accord was in their doctrine of the Church. True, their treatment of the doctrine exhibited different aspects of the subject. Colet never travelled far from Dionysian allegory, whilst Lefèvre was eminently practical. For both, indeed, the Church was One and Indivisible, like the seamless coat of her Lord; she was a homogeneous Unity, because One Body having One Head, even Jesus Christ Himself.[2] Accordingly, it is not difficult to see that, whatever defects they perceived in the contemporary state of the Christian Church, these did not affect the allegiance which they gave to her, because, in fact, they beheld her in idea, not as she was, but as the Lord Himself intended her. That they shut their eyes to the blemishes of the actual Church is very far from having been the case. Over and over again, as they expatiated on the ideal Church which they had in mind, they burst out, in impassioned grief, against the errors of their day.[3]

Between Lefèvre and the critics of morals and religion, of whom there were many at that epoch, several notable disagreements can be pointed out. One is strikingly prominent. Like Colet, with whose ideals his own in the main corresponded, he was entirely free from all mere captious fault-finding, from acrimony and anything even remotely bordering upon sarcasm, whenever he deliberated on the evils of the age. It is true that such censoriousness would have been quite

[1] *Lett. to Rad.*, pp. 88-90; Lupton, *Colet*, p. 262.

[2] *Lect. on Romans*, pp. 71-85.

[3] Lefèvre, *Quincuplex Psalterium*, Praef. and comment on the opening passage of Ps. 126; Com. in Rom. v, 14; Com. Lib. II, cap. IX, fo. XCIIII vo. (1 Cor. ix, 4). Observe his hope of an early reformation: "O tempora facilia ad salutem: et quam foelices quos continget hisce temporibus nasci. O nostra tempora quam difficilia: et quam difficile est salutem in nostris reperiri?"—Com. Lib. XI, cap. III, fo. CLXIX vo. (2 Tim. iii, 1).

out of keeping with the aim of his books. But a reason that goes deeper is to be adduced for the circumstance. Lefèvre was clearly—ought we not perhaps to say that he made himself?—unconscious of opponents.[1] We may say here of the Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul what can indeed be said of all his exegetical works, that whatever force they may have contributed to the French Reformation at its inception, "he puts forth no polemic that enters into particulars, but rather only an indication of what should be different from what it has in reality been, and, what must, with better knowledge, undergo alteration."[2] His was no controversial spirit. Courageous he frequently showed himself, when it was a question of declaring what he believed to be the truth; but he never once went out of his way to enunciate a portion of the truth which happened to be unnecessary to the matter in hand, and his boldness consisted chiefly in his unwavering advancement of independent opinions, though all the time perfectly aware that the many-eyed Sorbonne, only a short distance from him, was keeping a vigilant outlook for possible heresies.

The book of which we have just now given some particulars did not aim at either the re-statement of authorized doctrines or the revision of them. We consider this not a little remarkable. Lefèvre's opinions therein delivered are put forth in such a way as to leave the readers of his book in the position of being equally able to reconcile nearly all his statements with the doctrines of the mediæval Church, on the one hand, and with the doctrines of the later Reformed Churches on the other—so patent is the mistake, into which some have fallen,[3] of regarding Lefèvre as supply-

[1] Barnaud, *Lefèvre*, p. 44.

[2] Graf, p. 42.

[3] M. Barnaud, though usually well informed, sometimes puts Lefèvre in antagonism with the mediæval Church, in places where we believe a more careful examination of contemporary doctrine would have saved his modern biographer a few misconceptions—cp. *Lefèvre*, pp. 32, 35.

ing in it a basis for Protestant Theology. As a matter of fact, a Roman Catholic and a Protestant may, each with equal justice, claim Lefèvre, so far as the *Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles* are concerned.[1] What has been already remarked in reference to the Quincuple Psalter can be reproduced here. Dogma, as such, was never a prime, or even a secondary, objective with Lefèvre. The comments, above termed dogmatical, are, in truth, merely statements that arise naturally in the course of exposition, and their relation to Christian dogma is purely accidental.

That this book has proved of distinct value to the subsequent Reformation is obvious. His absolute independence of received authority in his comments, his example of exercising untrammelled powers of thought within the domain of religion, the emphasis he laid upon the requirement of faith to render valid the various acts of worship, his undisguised attempt to elevate worship into a spiritual sphere, to infuse a larger measure of spiritual activity into the Church, so as the better to enable her to accomplish her holy mission, and his earnest recommendation to all Christians of a close study

At the same time, we desire to add that most of the passages cited above from Lefèvre's *Commentaries* are to be found marked out for condemnation in the *Index Expurgatorius Librorum qui hoc saeculo prodierunt*, published by direction of Philip II in 1599, and in that of Quiroga (1601).

[1] M. Doumergue, I, 84, has invented a title for the system of thought which Lefèvre initiated in this book. He termed it "protestantisme fabrisien." He admitted that, if "Protestant Reformer" were to be taken as synonymous with "religious revolutionist," this name could not be applied to Lefèvre: "Le Fèvre n'a pas brûlé la bulle du pape. Le Fèvre n'a pas écrit l'Institution chrétienne. Son caractère était doux, méditatif, comme devait l'être, à soixante dix-sept ans, celui d'un humaniste mystique. Et son protestantisme a été ce qu'il était lui-même, et ce qu'il devait être à cette époque, modéré, conciliant, avec des hésitations et des contradictions dont la double raison étaient l'âge et le mysticisme." (I, 85.) But Doumergue either does not know, or omits to observe, that this system was not altogether peculiar to the great Étaplois, that he, in fact, shared it to no small extent with Colet, Erasmus, and many others of his contemporaries. This Protestantism might just as well be called Coletine, Erasmian, as Fabrisian.

of the Divine Records—these, it cannot be denied, have conferred upon Lefèvre's work a unique place in religious history, and endowed him with the right to be ever afterwards hailed as the first Christian teacher, the pioneer of religious thought, of modern times. To that extent he assisted the Protestant Reformation. Lefèvre himself was no Protestant; but independent thought in matters of religion became possible for both Catholic and Protestant after the appearance of his *Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles*.[1] This book, therefore, serves as a kind of landmark in the progress of Christendom towards a more perfect knowledge of her Lord and His will.

Lefèvre was residing at the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés as the guest of his pupil and patron, Guillaume de Briçonnet, Bishop of Lodève, when he issued the two works already mentioned. About this time, too, he gave his assistance to a practical scheme of reformation.

The monks of this ancient abbey had become lax in their observance of the rules of their order and addicted to numerous faults that urgently needed correction. Briçonnet, their abbot, therefore, with Lefèvre's help, endeavoured to introduce a better state of things.[2] Most of the monks submitted to the new, or rather

[1] Doumergue, I, 86-7.

[2] Cardinal d'Amboise, in 1499, had tried to effect improvements amongst the monastic orders, especially the Jacobins and Cordeliers of Paris—Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, V, 147. In 1502 it was found necessary to command the royal officers to see that the Cordeliers obeyed their general for the restoration of order. Similar measures took place, about this time, at many other monastic establishments. Even at St. Germain-des-Prés, d'Amboise had sought to enforce beneficial changes with the assistance of the soldiery. His strong measures only caused greater confusion and irregularities—Graf, p. 19.

Most of these efforts at betterment produced results of no serious consequence: "Without denying the importance and the sincerity of these attempts, they appear to have been, for the most part at least, only a means of distracting attention and preventing a more thorough investigation"—Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, V, 341.

restored, conditions. Some, however, preferred to depart, and their places were speedily filled with a more docile and worthy company.

Erasmus was pursuing his studies at Cambridge, whilst Lefèvre was engaged in publishing his *Pauline Commentaries*. In the light of after events, the labours of the great Dutch scholar during his residence at the English University were of paramount importance.

On his arrival he experienced great disappointment. He had come to please his friend, Bishop Fisher, who was eager that the study of Greek should be introduced into his University by such a notable scholar. Fisher's plans, conceived no doubt for the benefit of the University, of which he was Chancellor, had probably possessed attractions for Erasmus. The latter had his own peculiar hopes and projects. But they did not include the pioneer labours that Fisher expected him to undertake. Although to be the introducer of Greek studies at Cambridge would form a proud title to esteem, and one moreover which must be accorded to Erasmus, yet that was very far from being the object he had in view when he accepted Fisher's invitation. The truth of the matter was that Erasmus was engaged upon important works for which he needed supplies, and the post of Greek lecturer at Cambridge seemed to afford him the prospect of obtaining them.

But when he reached the University he found that his expectations could not be realized as abundantly as he desired. Hence the bitter irony of the words he wrote to Colet: "At last I behold the footprints of Christian poverty!" At that time he had not made a beginning of lecturing, but he saw clearly enough that Cambridge was no gold mine, and he wanted money sorely. A few weeks later, his letter to Colet (13th September) reveals him occupied with some minor Greek treatises. Evidently, he had not yet engaged upon any work of importance. Perhaps these smaller

works were merely intended as a means of getting from patrons the funds necessary for prosecuting the greater; his allusion to a hope of a present from Fisher makes this surmise natural. In the same letter a hint was thrown out by Erasmus of an intention of withdrawing from Cambridge altogether. He expressed this more definitely in a letter of 5th October to the same correspondent.[1] Colet, therefore, in answer to the epistle of 13th September,[2] uttered the wish, which he nevertheless did not expect would be fulfilled, that Erasmus would become a master in the new school, "but," he added, "I still cherish a hope that thou wilt give us some assistance, even if it be in the education of our teachers, when thou leavest those Cambridge people." The biblical teacher appeared in a piece of advice he gave to Erasmus: "Continue thy labours on Basil, for thus thou givest Isaiah to us."

In the closing paragraphs of his letter, Colet made merry over Erasmus's continual petitions for money. True, the latter had not asked him for any, on this occasion, but the Dean fancied that hints of that kind were to be read between the lines of an epistle which mentioned the indigence of another scholar. Accordingly, though he told Erasmus he would send some money to him, he made the offer in such a manner as wounded the susceptibilities of the great *savant*. Colet truly was the soul of generosity where his pet scheme of the school was in question, but he displayed no marked liberality outside of it. Indeed, he himself admitted a consciousness of this fault.[3]

To Colet's letter, therefore, Erasmus replied on 29th October with a lengthy epistle[4] in which he showed how

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 109F. He forwarded this ep. before he had received the reply to his letter of 13th September.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1523 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 458A. He hardly deserves Nisard's strictures, however: "(Colet) répondait aux demandes d'argent d'Érasme par des vœux pour que Dieu l'assistât, et par des compliments sur sa gloire"—*Études*, p. 164. [4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 131D-133A.

hurt he was at the tone of Colet's allusions to his perpetual quest for the funds needed to carry on his great biblical studies. The concluding portion of this interesting letter contains the account of an incident which occurred at Cambridge and which serves to throw light upon the difficulties that then stood in the way of attempts to diffuse education and knowledge throughout the country :—

> I have just remembered something which will amuse thee. I was mentioning the subject of the under-teacher amongst the Masters, when one of them smiling, said : " Who would pass his life teaching boys if he could live by any other means? " I answered that the labour of instructing youth in good manners and literature seemed to me honourable above measure, that even Christ did not contemn that age, and that nowhere else could more plenteous results be obtained, since that was the cornfield and forest of the commonwealth. I added that many holy men were of the same opinion, and held that nothing would be so meritorious in the sight of God as leading the young to Christ. He, wrinkling his nose (*corrugato naso*), replied mockingly : " If anyone wishes to serve Christ at all, let him enter a monastery and religion." To which I rejoined that Paul makes true religion consist in works of charity, and that charity lies in this, that we should benefit our neighbours as much as we can. He opposed this, as being unskilfully said. "*Behold we have left all,* in this," said he, "is perfection." " He has not left all," I retorted, " who, when he is able to benefit many persons by his toil, declines the work because it is esteemed inferior." Then I dismissed the man to avoid an argument. Gaze upon the wisdom of the Scotist, and thou canst imagine the conversation.

Possibly, skirmishes of the kind here mentioned, between the new ideals and the old, were frequent, and served to render Erasmus even still more discontented with life at Cambridge. A few days after he had sent his long epistle to Colet, he wrote (2nd November) to

Ammonius declaring that he would come up to London by 1st January, that Cambridge was all very well to pass the summer in, but in the winter was quite intolerable.[1] He added, in a letter of 11th November to the same friend, the further intimation of a desire to be near St. Paul's when he came to London.[2] By this he may have meant that he wished to enjoy Colet's society, or to give the assistance to the Coletine school for which the Dean had asked.

As an actual fact, Erasmus came up to London early in 1512, but remained only a few weeks there, returning to Cambridge somewhat hastily in the beginning of February. The rest of 1512, and a good portion of 1513, was spent by him in study at the University. During this time—a time probably of no greater contentment but certainly of greater silence on his part than usual—those studies advanced rapidly which have brought Erasmus more enduring fame than all the rest of his labours put together. At length, on 31st October, 1513, the letter that he wrote to congratulate Colet upon his return to peaceful work at St. Paul's, contained a hint that the great biblical work of Erasmus was nearing completion :—

> If St. Matthew is not with thee, then it is with (the Bishop of) Rochester, as indeed I much suspect. But as I had given it separately, he did not join it with the others. If it be lost, I will put the blame upon myself, and the trouble of doing the work over again will be a punishment to me for my heedlessness.[3]

Not long after he wrote this, Erasmus terminated finally his official connection with Cambridge. In January, 1514, he removed to London. It was not the result of any sudden resolve. He had been maturing his plans, and the particular studies which he had

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 112C.

[2] Such probably is the interpretation to be put on the phrase ; "Mallem non abesse longius a Paulo "— *Ibid.*, 120C.

[3] *Ibid.*, 101D.

decided upon carrying through he had now finished. To speak thus would perhaps present the famous scholar in an unfavourable light, as if his whole sojourn and work in Cambridge had been part of an effort of his merely to obtain time and money to accomplish his own peculiar schemes, without any serious desire to repay his patrons adequately for the benefits of which he was the recipient. It is much truer to fact, however, to say that those years of isolation and seclusion which Erasmus passed at the University left a permanent impress upon the character of that seat of learning—indeed a much more profound result than Erasmus himself suspected. For, later on, when he described the beneficial effects of Fisher's authority at Cambridge, and traced to that estimable man everything that was admirable and hopeful about the University, he made no mention of his own ascendancy, with reference to the course of studies there, over Fisher. Perhaps he was unaware of it. Nevertheless, it is certain that "Erasmus's influence over Fisher, and through Fisher over Cambridge at large, was far greater and more enduring than their respective biographers would lead us to suppose."[1] The subsequent history of the University reveals the accuracy of this remark.

Mr. Mullinger has an excellent description of the last days of Erasmus's sojourn in Queen's College, which may well be quoted here, as it is no less consonant with fact than imaginative in representation :—

> Such then is the final glimpse that we gain of Erasmus at Cambridge—it is that of a solitary, isolated scholar, prematurely old with anxiety and toil, weighed down by physical suffering, dejected by disappointment and oppressed with debt; rarely venturing beyond the college gates, and then only to encounter hostile or indifferent glances; while all around there waited for him an invisible foe—the

[1] Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, pp. 497-8, and 508. See also Allen, *Eras. Epp.*, I, 591.

pestilence that walketh at noon-day; often by night, in his study high up in the south-west tower, "out-watching the Bear" over the pages of St. Jerome, even as Jerome himself had outwatched it many a night, when transcribing the same pages in his Bethlehem cell, some eleven hundred years before. Then winter came on, and towards the close of each shortening day Erasmus could mark from his window the white fogs rolling in from the surrounding marshes, reminding him of the climate he most of all disliked—the climate of his native Holland—while day after day the sound of footsteps, in the courts below, grew rarer and rarer. At last the gloom, the solitude, the discomfort, and the panic, became more than he could bear; and, one night, the customary lamp no longer gleamed from a certain casement in the south-west tower. And when the fear of the plague was over, and the university returned, it was known that Erasmus had left Cambridge; and no doubt many a sturdy defender of the old learning said he was very glad to hear it, and heartily hoped that all this stir about Greek, and St. Jerome, and errors in the Vulgate, was at an end.[1]

[1] Mullinger, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

CHAPTER VI

GERMANY BEFORE LUTHER (1511-1516). THE REUCHLIN CONTROVERSY

GERMANY truly, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, stood in marked contrast with the other nations of western Europe.

In France, the royal power, by means of the slow and cautious efforts of Charles VII and the astute policy of his son and successor Louis XI, had begun to constitute itself the centre of authority in the land. It followed that the French nation was in possession of a strong central government which made for civic peace and unity.[1]

Ferdinand and Isabella had also, by methods that bore some resemblances to those pursued by the French monarchs, succeeded in establishing their authority over the whole of the Iberian peninsula, except that part which belonged to Portugal. As in France, the monarchy was the centre around which the nation gathered. Hitherto Spain had had, in truth, no sense of nationality, yet, so completely did the conjoint sovereigns accomplish the work of consolidation that, by the commencement of the sixteenth century, they had firmly laid the foundations of that glory and eminence

[1] Robertson (William, D.D.), *Hist. of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, Dublin, 1770, I, 94-101; Guizot, *Hist. de France*, Paris, 1875, II, 367-70, 443; Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, IV, pt. 2, 116, 399-410; Duclos, *Hist. of Lewis XI*, Eng. trans., Dublin, 1746, II, 336 *et seq.*

to which the Spanish nation attained in later years.[1]

Of European nations the only one which could with truth be described as having emerged from the middle ages with most of the qualifications of a compact nationality was the English. The Wars of the Roses had brought the greater barons to destruction, and feudalism in England may be said to have come to an end at the Battle of Bosworth. Under the Tudor sway all classes of Englishmen had awakened to the consciousness of a nationality in which all had a common interest.[2] As in France and Spain, the English king formed the centre of authority and the bond of union in the nation, but with this difference : that the nation had compacted itself into a close national unity which found its expression in a centralized government. The tendency of the times in all races was towards consolidation, but consolidation had here reached a stage far in advance of anything that had been conceived elsewhere.[3]

Nor was Germany free from the tendency of the age ; but the peculiar circumstances of the nation had given it a direction different from that which it had taken in other lands. It is true that the Emperor, if regard be paid to the grandiloquent titles he enjoyed, wielded an authority of the most extensive and arbitrary kind. The titles, however, descended from times when the rights and prerogatives they signified were real and substantial, and they continued their existence even after the powers they denoted had disappeared. In actual fact, towards the end of the fourteenth century, the last of the dominions which belonged to the empire had been alienated,[4] and from that time " not a single city, a single castle, a single foot of land pertained to the Emperor as head of the Empire."[5] The power of each Emperor, as well as his resources, came, in fact,

[1] Prescott (W. H.), *Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella*, London, 1857, I, 246-90 ; cp. also II, chapters I to IV.

[2] Green (J. R.), *Hist. of the English People*, II, 15.

[3] Hume, *Hist. of England*, III, 395-400.

[4] Robertson, *Charles V*, I, Note XLI.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, 182, and Note XLI.

from the possessions which he held apart from his imperial rank. Consequently, his authority over Germany was as limited as his throne was imaginary. Germany, indeed, had no real master, but then, as a national entity, there was no such country as Germany. This name was only a collective term applied to the totality of the German States, which were numerous, varied in extent and importance, and were ruled, protected, and administered by princes, who, within their own domains, exercised a sovereign authority which they had wrested from the Emperors. "Each (feudal unit) had its estates, its court without appeal, its territorial army, its own system of finance, a large measure of control over its clergy, its own foreign policy."[1] It followed, therefore, that the tendency towards centralization, so far from augmenting the imperial power, reinforced the influence of the numerous petty sovereigns. These princes became the nuclei round which consolidation took place. This concentration of authority, not in the hands of one powerful monarch, but of many inferior princes, though it may have benefited the inhabitants of the several German States, had a further effect in rendering any concerted action for an imperial design more and more difficult.[2]

Throughout this disjointed race the disturbances, industrial, economic, and social, were at work, which had already burst out in the Tyler-Ball insurrection in England and in the Jacquerie in France, but had now almost completely disappeared from these countries. Apart from these influences, however, the movements, literary and religious, which had begun to influence the Christian peoples of western Europe, had not less effect upon the German mind of the same epoch.

The first quarter of the sixteenth century, therefore,

[1] Armstrong (E.), *The Emperor Charles V*, London, 1902, I, 45.

[2] Lindsay (Thomas M., M.A., D.D.), *Hist. of the Reformation*, Edinburgh, 1906, I, 338; Stubbs (Bishop W.), *Germany in the Later Middle Ages* (1200-1500), edited by Arthur Hassall, M.A., London, 1908, pp. 184-6, 207 *et seq.*

affords the spectacle of a Germany, restless and full of revolt against what seemed to be wrongs and oppressions, yet scarcely capable, through lack of national unity, of stating definitely her desires. A multitude of difficult problems mingled together and confused, with their manifold complications, the various questions at issue. New social conditions were taking the place of the old. Ancient legal systems, with which the countryfolk had grown, by long custom, familiar and contented, had been superseded, and the newly-introduced Roman Law appeared to be nothing else than a modern invention for legalizing injustice and tyranny. These changes were accompanied by others which multiplied the number of taxes to be borne and increased the amount to be paid on each of them.[1] In all these matters, the hierarchy, rightly or wrongly, obtained the reputation of being the chief offenders, and, long before Luther arose, the German peasant and townsman had learnt to regard with bitter hatred the whole ecclesiastical organization. Humanism, with its opposition to the prevalent scholastic philosophy, its insistent claim to independence of thought, and its unconcealed sceptical attitude towards the religion of the day, added a further supply, and that an abundant one, to the already numerous complexities of German life. Consequently, if the history of the German race, from the opening of the century to the Peasants' War of 1525, be found to consist of a series of revolts, economic, literary, religious, this is not inexplicable. Each outburst, moreover, was, at least to some extent, provoked by the incentives of the other; not one of them had a simple issue in view. For example, the forces and energies that belonged to the several peasant risings entered into, not only the religious contest under Luther, and the revolt of the knighthood under Franz von Sickingen,

[1] See Bax (E. Belfort), *German Society*, etc., chap. VII, "Country and Town at the end of the Middle Ages," and chap. VIII, "The New Jurisprudence"; also Robertson, *Charles V*, I, Notes Y, Z, AA, BB.

but, earlier than either of these, the literary contest under Reuchlin.[1]

The last-named is momentous. During its wearisome, protracted course the many-sided spirit of revolt displayed itself. It has been named the true commencement of the German Reformation, but, whether the description can be maintained or not, one thing is certain, that the Reuchlin controversy only ended when the Lutheran overshadowed it.

The central figure of this celebrated literary war, John Reuchlin, was born at Pforzheim in 1455, of parents who were worthy people but of no remarkable station in life.[2] In early youth Reuchlin's love of learning attracted the notice of Charles, Margrave of Baden-Durlach. This was the first important event in his career, inasmuch as it provided for him other profitable opportunities.[3] According to a fairly common habit of the times, he pursued his studies not at one university but at several. For instance, he began, as a boy of 15, at Freiburg-in-Breisgau, visited Paris, took his B.A. degree at Basle, returned to Paris for the sake of gaining additional knowledge of Greek, and then passed on to the Law University of Orleans to take up the serious business of his life. Here he proceeded to the degree of Bachelor of Civil Law. Thence he went to Poitiers in furtherance of the same legal studies, and became a Licentiate.[4] Fully equipped as a lawyer, he migrated to the newly-founded University of Tübingen, intending, perhaps, to lecture there on Law. But Count Eberhard of Würtemberg attached him to himself in the capacity of secretary or interpreter

[1] Bax, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-9, 51-73; also his *Peasants' War in Germany*, London, 1899, pp. 9-13, 19-28, etc.; Armstrong, *Charles V*, I, 205-16.

[2] Majus (Jo. Henric.), *Vita Jo. Reuchlini Phorcensis*, Francofurti & Spirae, 1687, pp. 139-40. For some particulars concerning Reuchlin's family, see *Praef. ad Lectorem* and pp. 140 *et seq.*

[3] Lilly (W. S.), *Renaissance Types*, London, 1901, p. 179.

[4] Majus, pp. 151, 165, and 169.

during a journey into Italy (1482).[1] On his return to Stuttgart, the Count appointed him Assessor to the Supreme Court. In the following year (1483), the Dominican order conferred on him the honour of being their Proctor in Germany. Reuchlin thus became the chosen champion of that order, and held the position for nearly thirty years without any adequate recompense. This is a matter worthy of note in relation to subsequent events.

Another Italian journey that Reuchlin undertook in 1492, as the companion of Ludwig, a natural son of Count Eberhard, had marked effect on his mental development. He stayed there for nearly a year, during which time he made the acquaintance of Hermolaus Barbarus who Hellenized his name into Capnion, or Capnio (that is, *Smoke*, which is the meaning of Reuchlin in German), by which cognomen the humanists generally delighted to call him, though Reuchlin himself rarely, if ever, employed it. He also entered into a friendship with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, that extraordinary, but not unlovable, mystical striver after the *omne scibile*—a friendship fraught with momentous results to the course of both his studies and his later life. Pico exerted a profound influence upon the German visitor. Traces, neither few nor insignificant, of that influence appeared in the turn Reuchlin's mind took about this time towards mysticism, the Jewish Cabbala, and studies in the Hebrew language.

Pico entertained, in common with most of the Neo-Platonists of Florence, the conviction that Platonism,

[1] Stokes (F. G.), *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, London, 1909, p. xxvii. Majus, in two places (pp. 19 and 170), gives 1487 as the date of this journey. Reuchlin (ep. to Leo X, March, 1517—see Ludwig Geiger, *Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel*, Tübingen, 1875, p. 269) says: "Igitur in Italiam profectus cum illustri Eberhardo Probo Suevorum nostra aetate primo Duce, cui a Secretis fiebam intravi Florentiam circiter 12 Kalendas Aprilis Anno Christi 1482." Perhaps Majus, when he was writing out the date, by mistake put *septimo* for *secundo*.

indeed all philosophy and mythology, was reconcilable with Christian doctrine ; and not only so, but that, all knowledge and religion being presumed the same in essence, both Christianity and Platonism ought to be viewed as merely parts of the one great truth.

> Ficino and his disciple Pico would trace a unity, a common principle in all philosophies and all religions; Plato should embrace Aristotle, Christianity, Judaism. . . . All philosophy, all fable was but the medium through which the hidden wisdom of the Godhead was revealed. Plato and Aristotle, Moses and Timæus, Zoroaster and Pythagoras, Bacchus and the Prophets, the Muses and the Sybils were fellow-witnesses of the faith.[1]

Pico went further than his master, and was disposed to seek in the Jewish Cabbala the harmony of pagan philosophy with the teachings of Christ. The study of the Cabbala demanded an adequate knowledge of the Hebrew and Chaldaic tongues. These, therefore, Pico learned, and included Arabic also within the scope of his studies.

Reuchlin's intercourse with Pico affected the current of his thoughts, and, in consequence, his mind became so engrossed by the wonderful mysteries contained in the Cabbala that he followed his new friend's example and entered on the study of the Semitic languages.

When he had returned to Germany, he was despatched on an embassy to the Imperial Court at Linz. The Emperor Frederick was impressed with the excellent character of the ambassador and ennobled him.[2] On this occasion Reuchlin came into contact with a Jew named Loans, from whom he received considerable instruction in the Hebrew tongue.

Changes in the principality of Würtemberg consequent on the death of his patron compelled Reuchlin

[1] Armstrong, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, pp. 340-7. Cp. Villari, *Savonarola*, I, 59 *et seq.*, and an excellent chapter (vol. I, chap. V) in Harford, *Michael Angelo Buonarroti*.

[2] Majus, pp. 173-81, gives the patent of nobility.

to retire to Heidelberg for safety. Here Philip, the Elector-Palatine, took him into his employment as Privy Councillor, sending him in that capacity to Rome on a mission. Once again, Reuchlin found himself able to turn his enforced travels to the advantage of his studies, for in Rome he met with another Jew, Obadyah Sforno, who gave him some assistance in his Hebraic researches.

A short time after this, circumstances occurred which permitted him to resume his home-life in Stuttgart, and he was still resident there when, in 1502, he received promotion from the princes of the Swabian League[1] to the most exalted and responsible position he had yet held, that of Confederate Judge.

Amidst all the multifarious duties incident upon his legal profession, Reuchlin continued his Latin, Greek, and Hebraic studies. These constitute his title to enduring fame. For, if Erasmus deserves to be remembered because he introduced the New Testament in its original Greek to the Christian world, Reuchlin merits even higher honour, because he not only introduced the Old Testament in its original Hebrew, but also, by his labours, facilitated the study of the Hebrew language. Indeed, it is not too much to say that it was he who opened the treasures of oriental literature to Europe.[2]

His interest in the Hebrew language caused Reuchlin to seek intercourse with learned Jews. As a perfectly natural consequence, his interest in their books extended itself to their persons. He appears to have borne a deep affection for Loans whom he calls his "most gentle teacher," and the personal acquaintance he had with other Jews aroused in him a kindly disposition towards the whole race. But Reuchlin was a

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 226-34.

[2] Stokes, p. xxvi: "a pioneer among Orientalists, so that it has been said of him, enthusiastically but not unjustly, that he was the 'first who opened the gates of the East, unsealed the Word of God, and unveiled the sanctuary of Hebrew wisdom.'"

faithful Christian. In 1505, accordingly, he published a pamphlet entitled: "Doctor Johanns Reuchlins tütsch missiue: warumb die Judē so lang im ellend sind," in which he examined into the causes why the Jews suffer a long and miserable exile. He concluded that this was due to their obstinate denial of Christ. He therefore issued an invitation to any Jew who wished for instruction in the Christian faith to come to him. But though desirous of their conversion to Christianity, he could by no means approve of any attempt to carry out this worthy object by a system of persecution. Reuchlin's ideal plan was the more reasonable and Christian method of persuasion and instruction. His views were soon to bring him into a controversy, dangerous to himself, of importance in the history of western Europe, and entailing consequences for ecclesiastical authority which none of the original combatants realized at their first entrance into it.

This memorable controversy arose through an insignificant Jewish convert, John Pfefferkorn, whose character would seem to have been very questionable.[1] Erasmus has described him as a man who "from a disreputable Jew became a still more disreputable Christian"[2]; and besides the usually cited reasons for believing Erasmus's estimate of him not inaccurate, some additional grounds have been discovered. Pfefferkorn's adoption of Christianity may, therefore, very well have proceeded, as was long ago alleged, from fear of the consequences of his evil deeds.[3] However

[1] Guilhelmus Bricot (*Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, Teubner's edit., Lipsiae, 1858, II, Ep. 54) implies an evil reputation to Pfefferkorn and adds that now he is baptized "et ergo nunc est probus sicut non dubito."

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1639D. Majus, p. 34, relates that Pfefferkorn had announced himself to his fellow-Jews as a Messiah, and then turned Christian through fear of the consequences of the imposture. But, says Majus, p. 254, this one title to honour belongs to him: he remained a faithful Christian to the end of his days.

[3] Stokes, p. xxii.

that may be, the convert followed up his baptism with zealous efforts for the evangelization of the Jews in Germany, principally by means of pamphlets written by him in German and translated into Latin by some one else. The nature of these can easily be inferred from one which he wrote at the beginning of 1509 under the title *Der Juden Veindt: Hostis Judaeorum.* In it he maintained that the Jews undertook the medical profession for the express purpose of destroying Christians, and he volunteered the advice that they should be made scavengers instead! The most important thing in this pamphlet is an epigram composed by Ortuinus Gratius, an eminent theologian of Cologne, who thus appears publicly for the first time in connection with Pfefferkorn, although probably it had been he who had hitherto translated the convert's tracts into Latin.[1] A more notorious pamphlet (*Der Judenspiegel*) was produced by Pfefferkorn about the same time, in which, amongst other things, he advocated that the Jews should be deprived of their books, because these, said he, hindered their conversion. With the countenance and support of the Dominicans of Cologne, where he resided, he formed the design of endeavouring to put into execution the advice he had given. During 1509, his Dominican friends obtained from the Princess Kunigunde a letter of recommendation to the Emperor who was then at Padua. Maximilian gave him a mandate which enjoined on the Jews in Germany to deliver up to Pfefferkorn such of their Hebrew books as were inimical to the Christian faith; it also constituted Pfefferkorn the sole judge as to what books should be destroyed. That person began forthwith to exercise his newly-acquired authority in a tyrannous manner at Frankfort-on-Main. He seized the prayer-books of the synagogue on the day before the Feast of Tabernacles. It was an act of malicious despotism, if indeed it was not rather an attempt to

[1] *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

coerce the wealthy Jews of Frankfort into purchasing his forbearance.[1]

Whether it was Reuchlin's connections with the Dominican order, or his eminence as the greatest German hebraist, or, perhaps, both combined, that attracted the zealous convert from Judaism, certain it is that Pfefferkorn presented himself, mandate in hand, before Reuchlin for his approbation.[2] Nothing was further from that scholar's intention. He discovered legal flaws in the mandate and declined to be a party to the execution of it. The Archbishop of Mainz took more active measures against the whole affair, for he ordered his clergy to refrain from having anything whatever to do with Pfefferkorn's crusade. Pfefferkorn exclaimed against the order, but the Archbishop replied that it would be advisable for him to obtain the co-operation of learned hebraists. To carry out this change of plan a fresh mandate was sought. Maximilian now confided the entire business to the Archbishop of Mainz, only suggesting to the prelate to consult on the matter Jacob von Hochstraten (or van Hoogstraten), the *Inquisitor hereticae pravitatis* for the dioceses of Köln, Mainz and Trier, Reuchlin, Victor von Karben (himself a convert from Judaism), and learned men from the Universities of Mainz, Köln, Erfurt, and Heidelberg. For some reason or other this arrangement fell through. An imperial mandate was consequently issued demanding the opinions of the above-named persons and Universities on the course to be adopted with regard to the Hebrew literature in question. Some of the Universities, as well as Hochstraten and Victor von Karben, expressed their conviction that the Talmud alone deserved to be burnt, but Reuchlin was the only one who delivered an explicit and reasoned statement

[1] Majus, p. 248, quotes the remark Melanchthon many years afterwards uttered: "The impostor knew that the Jews would straightway redeem their books at great expense." See also *The Edinburgh Review*, March, 1831, vol. LIII, Art. IX, p. 190.

[2] Majus, p. 35.

at full length. At the time when he composed his *Opinion* he understood that he was responding to the command of his Emperor and supplying a prominent and scholarly ecclesiastic with information upon a subject in which he was competent to address both Emperor and Archbishop.[1] He had no idea he was about to address the German public, otherwise, in all likelihood, he would have written more guardedly.

Reuchlin, in this document, disclaimed all real knowledge of the Talmud, but considered there was nothing in it actually hostile to the Christian faith. Certain other books, such as the Cabbala, the commentaries on the Bible, the liturgical, philosophical, and scientific works, he stated had been approved of by Popes, or sanctioned by them for use among the Jews, or they were of a kind that might be of service to Christian scholars. Of the later rabbinical compositions, two he held to be worthy of destruction, the *Toldoth Jeschu* and *Nizachon*, because they were of a blasphemous nature. Leaving the Hebrew books aside, Reuchlin discussed, with sound judgment, the results that would follow from actually depriving the Jews of their literature. Such a proceeding, instead of facilitating their conversion, would retard it. Gentle means would be more likely to produce the desired end. Jews had their rights as fellow-citizens of the German nation. The literature of the Greeks and Romans, moreover, was preserved and studied, though portions of it were hostile to Christianity, and it would be inconsistent therefore to lay violent hands on Hebrew literature on that ground. Finally, he suggested that, as part of the gentle means of converting the Jews, Professorships of Hebrew ought to be appointed in the Universities.[2]

Although this *Opinion* was in truth a private docu-

[1] Reuchlin wrote to Erasmus: "A Caesare Maximiliano, Imperatore nostro, jussus Consilium de libris Judaeorum concremandis scripsi."—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1524c.

[2] Majus, pp. 261-79.

ment, it came into the hands of Pfefferkorn. Filled with anger, he forthwith published a book against Reuchlin which he called his *Handmirror* (*Handtspiegel*). In this abusive production, he declared that Reuchlin had received bribes from Jews, that he knew nothing of Hebrew, and that he was a secret enemy of the Christian faith. Here, indeed, began the first drawn battle between the forces of the New Learning and the Old, between the new, young, active spirit of inquiry, growing more vigorous every day, and the narrow, reactionary, constraining spirit of mediævalism. Other battles would, later on, be fought between these irreconcilable foes, on greater and more startling issues, no doubt, issues which would introduce perplexities and complications amongst the combatants. No battle of them all, however, has more interest for the mere historical student on account of the simplicity of the matter involved. None more readily appeals to the modern scholar's sympathy with the central figure around whom this contentious tumult raged. And yet, it is doubtful if there would have been any serious controversy, any marshalling of hostile forces, on this particular occasion, if Reuchlin had shown himself as patient of Pfefferkorn's first miserable attempt at slander as his friends wished. Instead of meeting the attack with the silence it deserved, he immediately replied in a little treatise entitled *Speculum Oculare* (*Augenspiegel*), which the dispute has immortalized. The accusations of falsehood and the vituperations which he uttered against Pfefferkorn form an objectionable feature of this pamphlet. The modern reader is not unnaturally surprised that a man of Reuchlin's eminence should degrade himself by the use of such epithets. In his case, perhaps, it may be "largely excusable by the manners and customs of the age,"[1] yet two of his own friends, Erasmus and Pirckheimer,

[1] Lilly, p. 200.

censured his employment of abusive language.[1] Reuchlin, in the *Augenspiegel*, modifies on two points what he had said in his *Opinion*; he increases the number of Hebrew books which he considered worthy of condemnation, and, besides the tone of his pamphlet, so far as it expresses publicly his attitude to the Jews and their books, is decidedly apologetic.[2] In both particulars the *Augenspiegel* betokens a clear submission to popular sentiment upon the matter. But the book was altogether a mistake in tactics on Reuchlin's part. At the same time, he committed another serious error; he wrote conciliatory letters to two theologians of Köln, Arnold von Tongern and Konrad Kollin, admitting that he was no theologian and pleading that he had been faithful to the Dominicans as their Proctor for a considerable number of years. He issued this claim to the gratitude of the Dominicans, because it was the members of that order in Köln who were abetting Pfefferkorn.[3] In spite of, perhaps because of, this submissive attitude of Reuchlin, the theological faculty of Köln University demanded the withdrawal of the *Augenspiegel* and a public declaration of such a kind as would contain a definite statement of hostility towards the Jews and their Talmud. Perceiving that his conciliatory efforts had been misunderstood, Reuchlin, instead of complying with this demand, published in March, 1512, a German pamphlet, "Ain clare

[1] Ep. of Erasmus to Reuchlin, August, 1514, from Basle—Geiger, *Reuchlins Briefwechsel*, pp. 224-5 (*Illustrium Virorum Epistolae*, edition of 1519, III^b, 4^a), where it is wrongly dated from Louvain.

[2] Reuchlin calls it an apology in an ep. to Erasmus (*Eras. Op.*, III, 1524D), but it is apologetic even beyond his own meaning. The ep. of Erasmus referred to in the previous note is a reply to this one of Reuchlin's. Erasmus therein advises Reuchlin to send the *libellus* (which Geiger, *loc. cit.*, thinks is the *Defensio contra Cal. Colonienses*) to Bishop Fisher and Dean Colet.

[3] The ep. to Tongern and a summary of that to Kollin are given in Majus, pp. 321-5, and both in full in *Reuchlins Briefwechsel*, pp. 137-44. Reuchlin's corresp. with the Theol. Fac. of Köln and Konrad Kollin is to be found in Bulaeus, VI, 52-8.

Verstentnus in tütsch,' in which he explained his position to his German countrymen.

A new and greater impetus to the growth of the dispute was thus imparted. Pfefferkorn produced another slanderous brochure against Reuchlin, and Arnold von Tongern issued a polemic against him. These only increased his anger. He replied with a *Defence against the Calumniators of Köln*. His friends were grieved with this fresh outburst of impatience, and his enemies obtained from the Emperor a mandate for its suppression. Matters were now ripe for a further move. The "Inquisitor hereticae pravitatis," Jacob von Hochstraten, summoned Reuchlin to appear before him at Mainz on 13th September, 1513. Reuchlin, through a proctor, appealed to Rome. Pope Leo left the matter to the decision of the Bishops of Worms and Speyer, the former of whom did not act, and the latter delegated it to two of his subordinates, his Dean and a jurist. In accordance with their exoneration of Reuchlin, at the end of March, 1514, the Bishop of Speyer delivered a judgment favourable to the great scholar.[1] Hochstraten thereupon appealed to the Holy See.

In consequence of the efforts put forth by the combatants, a still wider publicity had been given to the quarrel. Already the doctors of Köln had sought and obtained from the Universities of Mainz, Erfurt, and Louvain a condemnation of the *Augenspiegel*; and they had submitted the question to the Sorbonne in order to gain, if possible, the concurrence of a Theological Faculty of such commanding pre-eminence as that of the University of Paris. Reuchlin himself wrote on the subject to Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, because he felt confident that he would receive the sympathy of that good man. He therefore put his cause into his hands, claiming Lefèvre's powerful interest on his behalf when the business should come before the doctors of the

[1] Majus, pp. 404-9. See *Eras. Op.*, III, 1524E.

Sorbonne for consideration, and hoping that "the great Theological School will quickly send at least a word of brotherly comfort to him as a fellow-student and a member of the same University of Paris."[1] This letter was despatched on 31st August, 1513. Other epistles from eminent personages followed it, urging a like request.[2] As for Lefèvre, he did what he could. He was not himself a doctor of the Sorbonne, but he enlisted the services of friends who were, and he took care to have both the letter which Reuchlin had written to him and the other documents which had accompanied it laid before the various assemblies of theologians. From the outset of the process a few very prominent doctors stoutly defended Reuchlin: the Chancellor of the University, Godefroi Boussard; the Penitentiary and Royal Confessor, Guillaume Petit;[3] Guillaume Chastel and Martial Mazurier, two devoted friends of Lefèvre. And Reuchlin had, moreover, friends in Paris who were busily promoting his cause. One of these, Guillaume Cop, the physician of King Louis, on being asked by his royal patron if he knew this man Reuchlin, replied that he had not seen him for about forty years, but that he knew through his teacher, who had once been a pupil of Reuchlin's, that he was a profoundly learned man, one who had devoted himself to honourable studies, as his numerous erudite works proved. Cop had no sooner given this answer to the King than a bishop there present (possibly the Bishop of Paris,

[1] Bulaeus, VI, 62 (also Herminjard, I, 9-15): "Sanè plurimum de te mihi spei est, cum laudatissimo Theologorum Collegio tam diligenter meo nomine agas, ut aliquam saltem consolationem fraternam mihi suo confratri et ejusdem Universitatis Parisiensis membro, celeriter mittant." Geiger, *Briefwechsel*, p. 198, gives only a summary of this epistle.

[2] Geiger, *op. cit.*, p. 223. For the ep. of Quonus to Lefèvre, 24th July (1514), see App. III. Reuchlin himself, and Duke Ulrich on his behalf, wrote (June, 1514) to the Sorbonne—Bulaeus, VI, 63-5.

[3] Majus, p. 470, called this influential ecclesiastic an opponent of Reuchlin. Although Reuchlin himself thought so too, it was a mistake.

Étienne de Poncher) exclaimed: "You also are a Judaiser."[1]

His efforts were in vain. After nearly a year's discussion of the case the force of numbers in the Faculty told, and, from fear of a papal brief, a decision was hastily arrived at, on 2nd August, 1514, supporting the theologians of Köln. When he was conveying this news to Reuchlin, Lefèvre administered to him one piece of comfort. He told him that his Parisian friends were solacing themselves with the reflection that, after all, the decision of the Sorbonne was only an academic opinion, and probably would not do him any serious harm. Nevertheless, he advised Reuchlin to do all in his power to render his cause successful at Rome, for "if thou dost conquer, we conquer with thee."[2]

By this time the controversy had attained a European reputation; in fact, it formed the prominent topic in the literary correspondence of the period. All the scholars in Christendom sympathized warmly with Reuchlin.[3] He was fighting their battle, and they knew it;[4] if he were to suffer defeat, freedom of thought would be at an end, and all the progress in knowledge

[1] Ep. of Cop to Reuchlin, 25th August, 1514—Bulaeus, VI, 65-6; Majus, p. 461; Geiger, *Briefwechsel*, p. 223; Herminjard, I, 16.

[2] Autograph letter of Lefèvre to Reuchlin, 30th August, 1514, preserved in the Royal Library, Berlin; given by Herminjard, I, 15-18, and summarized by Geiger, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

[3] See the ep. of Buschius in Bulaeus, VI, 68, and epp. of Erasmus to Reuchlin, 1st March, 1515, and 29th September, 1516—Geiger, *Briefwechsel*, pp. 119-21, and 258-60 (*Illust. Vir. Epp.*, III[a-b] and *t.*); Allen, II, 49 and 350-1.

[4] Sir William Hamilton in the *Edinburgh Review* of March, 1831, p. 192. Cp. also the ep. of Luther to Reuchlin, 14th December, 1518—De Wette (Dr. Wilhelm Martin Leberecht), *Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe*, etc., Berlin, 1825, erster theil, p. 196: "Dominus tecum, Vir fortissime. Gratulor misericordiae Dei, quae in te est, Vir et eruditissime et humanissime, qua tandem praevaluisti obstruere os loquentium iniqua. Fuisti tu sane organum consilii divini, sicut tibi ipsi incognitum, ita omnibus purae theologiae studiosis expectatissimum: adeo longe alia fiebant a Deo, et alia videbantur geri per vos."

that had been gained in recent years would be swept away, for a triumph of the Dominicans in Germany would entail grave consequences for the cause of learning throughout the whole Christian world. There was ample reason, therefore, for the belief entertained by the Parisian *savants*, Budé, Lefèvre and the rest, and men in England like Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, Dean Colet, Grocyn and Tunstall, besides the great German scholars, that the controversy touched themselves.[1] Erasmus, moreover, and probably others also, wrote to influential persons at Rome in aid of Reuchlin's cause.[2] Fisher and Colet tried to win support for him at the English Court; and even the Emperor Maximilian, although no patron of Reuchlin, addressed the Pope in his favour.[3]

When the decision of the Papal Commissioners appeared (July, 1516), it was found to be favourable to Reuchlin. Sylvester Prierias, the Master of the Sacred Palace, however, was hostile to the great hebraist; and his efforts, assisted by the gifts distributed by Hochstraten, succeeded in hindering the pronouncement of a papal sentence which would be in accord with the findings of the Commission. Leo, consequently, brought the affair to an indecisive conclusion by a mandate *De Supersedendo*, by which neither side gained a verdict.

Whilst his cause lay *sub judice* at Rome, Reuchlin had displayed an admirable spirit of patience and self-control.[4] But, indeed, by this time, the contest itself

[1] Majus, pp. 52, 448-62; More to Dorpius—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1915D; Erasmus to Reuchlin, 27th August, 1516, and 29th September, 1516—*Illust. Vir. Epp.*; Erasmus to Pirckheimer, 2nd November, 1517—*Eras. Op.*, III, 268E; Pirckheimer's reply—*ibid.*, 219B, D.

[2] Cardinal Grimani—*Ibid.*, 144; Cardl. Riario—*ibid.*, 146E *et seq.*; Pope Leo—*ibid.*, 154C. Majus, p. 47, has drawn up an imposing list of the powerful persons and corporations who petitioned the Curia on Reuchlin's behalf.

[3] Majus, pp. 462-4; Stokes, p. xlii.

[4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1559A, B.

had undergone a radical change: the battle-ground had not only widened but shifted. How this took place it is a matter of some importance to explain.

Reuchlin, when the severity of the conflict in which he was engaged became known, had received encouraging letters from scholars and patrons of learning in England, France, and Italy, as well as in Germany. He considered that these, if published, would strengthen his position. Accordingly, he had issued a collection of them (March, 1514) with the title, *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae latinae, graecae & hebraicae varijs temporibus missae ad Joannem Reuchlin Phorcensem LL. doctorem.* Towards the end of the following year a book modelled on the plan of Reuchlin's appeared entitled: *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum ad venerabilem virum Magistrum Ortuinum Gratium Daventriensem Coloniae Agrippinae bonas literas docentem: varijs & locis & temporibus missae: ac demum in volumen coactae.* These letters purported to be written by certain theologians and scholars of no remarkable celebrity on the opposite side, and were ostensibly addressed to Ortuinus Gratius (Ortwin von Graes), a man "in scholarship respectable, but damned to everlasting fame as the butt of the keenest arrows ever launched by relentless wit against arrogant bigotry."[1] Why Ortuinus Gratius should have been selected for this baneful honour, rather than Hochstraten or Pfefferkorn or Tongern, is a question which has furnished occasion for many surmises. True, he had been from the start concerned in the dispute. The inference that he was, in a very real sense, Pfefferkorn, rested on a very good foundation,[2] and, in a book published a few months before the *Letters of the Obscure Men*, he had classed himself amongst the most vindictive of Reuchlin's opponents. But these considerations alone do not reveal sufficient

[1] Stokes, p. xx.

[2] Ep. of Joh. Holckot, *Epp. Obs. Vir.*, II, No. 21 (Teubner's edition of 1858, p. 234.).

grounds for his selection. A much more adequate reason (along with the many minor ones) is to be found in the detestation entertained for him by the humanists of Germany. He had been the schoolfellow at Deventer of some of these, had been himself a humanist, but had passed into the service of the forces of Obscurantism (imitating Aleander), and thus had incurred the obloquy of an apostate.

> The fact that Ortwin abased himself to become the kept humanist of the Cologne theologians suffices to explain all. The light of the new day had shone upon his face as upon the other "Poets," and yet—perhaps "for a handful of silver"—he had prostituted his scholarship in the defence of the barbarians![1]

So cleverly drawn were the manners and ways of the inferior ecclesiastics and theologians in these *Letters* that many of themselves bought, read, and enjoyed the book, fancying all the time that it was truly the work of men of their own class. The abler scholars never had any doubt as to its true character.[2] The book, in fact, was a pasquinade ; and that it should have led some of the very men who were the subjects of its ridicule into supposing it anything else is a tribute to the genius of its authors and to the unequivocal truthfulness of the satire. Of it, it is not too much to say, that this book is one of the very few satirical compositions which educated men in every age will enjoy.[3] Stupid persons are no bygone product ; conceited fools, who imagine themselves profound when they are only obtuse,

[1] Stokes, p. xlviii. Hamilton, *Edinburgh Review*, p. 205, declared that the personal hatred of Hermann von dem Busche, one of the joint authors of the *Epp. Obs. Vir.*, was an important, if not the chief, ground of the selection of Ortuinus.

[2] Ep. of More to Erasmus, 31st October, 1516—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1575A, B.

[3] A detailed account of the contents of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* is not given here, because these particulars do not enter into the scope of the present treatise. Mr. Francis Griffin Stokes has recently edited the *Epistolae*, with Translation and Notes, and to this admirable publication we refer those who desire more complete information.

belong to other epochs than the early sixteenth century; and a combination of the forces of self-interest and prejudice, ignorance and malevolence, may be confidently expected at all times when some fresh advancement of human knowledge is on foot. A translation of the *Letters of the Obscure Men* affords the general public the opportunity of entering into the amusement and of perceiving, beneath the sallies of keen wit, the tremendous issues for which the real authors were contending. The satire, however, in its entire force can only be estimated by a perusal of the original Latin, because this mimicked, with amusing fidelity, the vile Latinity in daily use by the class of the supposed writers of the *Letters*, and, accordingly, furnished to the humanists of that time no small part of the merriment. Many of the *Letters*, no doubt, contain a degree of coarseness little consonant with modern ideas. Some also must be regarded as rather brutal attacks upon one or two ecclesiastics of whose characters what is known now commands our respect and honour.[1] Pfefferkorn's wife is dragged into the pasquinade and her reputation befouled[2]—a practice common enough amongst the Italian humanists of the previous century in their literary quarrels, but not at all justifiable, on that account, amongst the authors of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, who had very much nobler aims in view than the rivalries of personal ambition or the pursuit of literary pre-eminence. But it is hard, at this time of day, and under quite other canons of good taste, to sit in judgment upon the authors of sixteenth century lampoons. Into all satire, one has reason to suppose, there must almost of necessity enter a large degree of injustice towards a few of those who have the misfortune to be its butts. Besides, the *Letters of the Obscure Men* require to be judged by their general bearing towards a certain class of persons of the period rather than by

[1] *Epp. Obs. Vir.*, I, Nos. 9, 21, etc.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, No. 13 (Teubner's edit., p. 37).

the way they affected this individual or that. The charge of coarseness, if it cannot be refuted (that is impossible), may at least find an explanation in the standard of the times and an excuse in a comparison instituted between them, on the one hand, and the works of Rabelais on the other—a comparison altogether favourable to the former.

Indeed, as estimable an authority on this subject as the late Bishop Creighton contended that the writers of the book applied "the caustic of their contempt with gentleness and moderation," and, in proof of this statement, pointed to the characters of the Obscure as they are portrayed in the letters :—

> The Obscure Men are not wicked or vicious : they have their frailties, and they fall before their temptations; but they do not rejoice in wrong-doing, and they feel remorse for their sins.[1]

Moreover, the main purpose of the book, inasmuch as it is of paramount importance, makes it possible to overlook the blemishes observable in its contents, though it cannot justify them. That purpose is always within sight ; there is hardly an epistle which has not some direct or indirect allusion to the Reuchlin dispute. Each of them is, as it were, a shot fired in that battle. Yet the battle, wherein these were the missiles, had widened beyond the limits of the original strife between a single scholar such as Reuchlin and his censors at Köln. A new body of combatants had entered into it, some of whom would not lay aside their weapons when Reuchlin's cause should have ended, but would continue fighting until a much greater issue should have been decided.

Konrad Muth, better known as Mutianus Rufus, held a canonry at Gotha.[2] He was one who had imbibed somewhat of the Neo-Platonic spirit in his Italian

[1] *Hist. of the Papacy*, VI, 54, 55.

[2] Strauss (Dr. D. F.), *Ulrich von Hutten*, Eng. (abridged) trans. by Mrs. Sturge, London, 1874, pp. 22-8.

travels, and was, therefore, dissatisfied with the contemporary religious forms and beliefs. His scholarship was profound, his personality attractive and his intellectual powers of so pre-eminent an order that the circle of friends that gathered around him from Gotha and the neighbouring University of Erfurt delighted to call their company the "Mutianic circle." The group was not remarkable for the number of its members but their brilliant intellects gave them a powerful ascendancy over the minds of the German people at that period. Not least among these notable persons were Crotus Rubeanus (John Jäger of Dornheim), Ulrich von Hutten, Hermann von dem Busche, Eoban Hesse, and Justus Menius. When the company met, as it frequently did, at the house of Mutianus at Gotha, the conversation turned oftentimes upon the religion of the day. Crotus, on such occasions, used to deliver sarcastic comments on the teaching and personal qualities of the clergy and the credulity of the people, to the enjoyment of his hearers. For not one of them all was orthodox in his Christianity. This circumstance is not to be wondered at; it was one of the consequences of the prevalent degeneracy of religion. Mutianus and his friends were only too liable to seek in a philosophized, almost paganized, Christianity a purer faith than that offered by the venal relic-mongers, the irreligious massing-priests,[1] and the unscrupulous ambitious churchmen, of their times. "I do not revere the coat or the beard of Christ; I revere the living God, Who wears neither coat nor beard," said Mutianus. Few pious Christians would feel inclined to quarrel with such an expression of faith. But there are other words of his far less likely to meet with approval, as, for instance:—

> There is but one God and one Goddess, but there are many forms and many names: Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpina,

[1] Köstlin (Dr. Julius), *Martin Luther, sein Leben und seine Schriften*, Elberfeld, 1883, I, 105, relates Luther's experiences at Rome.

> Tellus, Mary. But do not spread it abroad; we must keep silence on these Eleusinian mysteries. In religious matters we must employ fables and enigmas as a veil. Thou who hast the grace of Jupiter, the best and greatest God, should in secret despise the little gods. When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ and the true God. But enough of these things, which are too high for us.[1]

Yet, with all their strange views, the little humanistic sodality at Gotha stood for the emancipation of the intellect, and, more than this, for a re-constitution of Christianity in its creeds, its ceremonies, and its place in human life, by bringing the whole subject of religion before the bar of human reason. What has been said in praise of the best of the Italian humanists might be just as truly said of the Mutianic circle and the German humanists generally :—

> There is nothing great and noble in human nature that might not, we fancy, have grown and thriven under their direction, if the circumstances of Italy had been more favourable to high aspirations. As it was, the light was early quenched and clouded by the base vapours of a sensual, enslaved, and priest-corrupted society. The vital force of the Revival passed into the Reformation; the humanists, degraded and demoralized, were superseded. Still it was they who created the new atmosphere of culture, wherein whatever is luminous in art, literature, science, criticism, and religion has since flourished. Though we may perceive that they obeyed a false authority—that of the classics, and worshipped a false idol—style, yet modern liberty must render them the meed of thanks for this.[2]

After a temporary dispersion, the Gotha-Erfurt group gathered together again in 1512, and many were the animated discussions which they held over the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn dispute at its commencement. Cautious

[1] Strauss, p. 26.

[2] Symonds, *Revival of Learning in Italy*, pp. 535-6.

Mutianus, who, whatever his opinions on the Church or its doctrines might be, never published any works, wrote early in the controversy to Reuchlin to keep his opinions to himself[1]:—

> We must not babble of secrets, nor disturb the opinions of the masses, without which the Emperor would not be able long to retain the Empire, nor the Pope the Church, nor we our property, and all things would lapse into confusion. Therefore, most learned Capnion, leave us the faith of our fathers, and do not so favour the Jews as to injure the Christians.

Yet, when the strife increased, Mutianus did all he could, by writing and speaking, in favour of Reuchlin. Crotus, indeed, could say to Reuchlin, in 1514, in the name of the company[2]:—

> You have on your side the whole Mutianic order; it comprises philosophers, poets, orators, and theologians, all ready to fight for you. You have only to give the word of command.

But Crotus and his friends were already forming into line of battle without receiving any word of command from Reuchlin. Upon their many private conversations about him, the persecuted scholar, and his opponents, the whole crowd of "cowl-wearing monsters," there ensued several compositions intended originally for the entertainment of their own fraternity. One wrote a "Triumph of Capnio," a serious enough pamphlet, deriding the monkish persecutors and lauding the virtues and abilities of Reuchlin.[3] Probably, many similar writings issued from the pens of the Reuchlinists at Erfurt and Gotha. Crotus contributed productions of his singular genius, such as would prove hurtful to the enemies of Reuchlin, amusing to his

[1] Strauss, p. 111.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 122; Stokes, p. lxvi. See also *Epp. Obs. Vir.*, I, No. 25 (in Teubner's edit., p. 73.)

friends, and successful as weapons of warfare. At first, his compositions circulated in manuscript amongst the "Mutianic host." Later, when they had increased in number, it was decided to publish them. This would appear to have been the origin of the *Letters of the Obscure Men*. That Crotus was the author of the First Part, published in 1515, as mentioned above, is now as certain as an exhaustive study of the matter can decide.[1] Possibly he received hints from friends; perhaps even some of the *Letters* are to be regarded as the works of several collaborators. But the conception, the plan, of the book originated with him. When this First Part had appeared and obtained immediate success and fame, Pfefferkorn thought it needful to put forth a *Defence*, wherein he characterized the *Letters* as the work of men who were worse than Saracens. Obviously, more "letters" would issue as a reply to such a "defence." The one member of the Mutianic group of friends who possessed the requisite mental capabilities for following up the lead given by Crotus was Ulrich von Hutten, and he, at the time, was studying at Bologna. The scheme of the *Letters* appealed to him irresistibly. He felt himself impelled to publish an Appendix to Part I, and also a Second Part.[2] In both of these the satire is well maintained, but, whilst the humour of the First Part (Crotus's work) is slightly veiled, though none the less pungent on that account, the humour of the Second Part is more frank, boisterous, and pugnacious.[3]

The entire work (for the so-called Third Part hardly requires to be mentioned, since it did not appear until many years afterwards) thus is to be reckoned as the

[1] Majus, pp. 424-5, notices that Paulus Jovius believed Reuchlin himself was the author, but that others thought Erasmus or Hutten was. Herr Walther Brecht, in 1904, decided the authorship as mentioned in the text above—Stokes, pp. lvii and lxvi.

[2] The Appendix appeared in the autumn of 1516, the Second Part early in 1517.

[3] Stokes, p. lxvii.

composition of two men, Crotus and Hutten. If a third person had any hand in it that must have been Hermann von dem Busche.[1]

Although they joined heartily in the laughter, neither Reuchlin nor Erasmus liked the book; the former, because he felt sure it would only embitter his enemies still further against him and affect his cause adversely;[2] the latter, because he knew that the hatred of the monks against all humanists would be thereby increased and their hostility become violent and dangerous.[3]

Much as Pope Leo favoured the humanistic movement, the *Letters of the Obscure Men* proved too serious a weapon against the whole ecclesiastical organization to be overlooked. Thereupon, in the spring of 1517, he denounced them, and, in his Bull, anathematized the authors as "sons of iniquity" impelled to their production by "wicked, damnable, and temerarious loquacity."[4]

The weapon once launched could never be recalled, and all the Papal Bulls ever issued would have been ineffectual to counteract the permanent results of that one work. Satire is the one type of assault against which there is no defence. It is always hurtful, it always leaves a rankling wound, and sometimes it is cowardly. But it is robbed of at least half its power to hurt if it be untrue. In this special case, however, its accuracy in depicting the characteristics of the majority of the lower clergy and monks of the time was so complete that the satire gained full force from its entire truthfulness. If anyone, in these modern days, feels inclined to draw attention to the cowardliness of the attack made

[1] *The Edinburgh Review*, March, 1831, pp. 203-6, makes this certain.

[2] Strauss, p. 138.

[3] See ep. of Wolfgang Angst to Erasmus, 19th October, 1515, *Eras. Op.*, III, 1777B, c. Erasmus, writing to Caesarius and Count Nuenar (*ibid.*, 1622 and 1626) tried to explain away the mooted inference that the *Epp. Obs. Vir.* were the natural sequel to his own *Encomium Moriae.*

[4] Stokes, p. lv; Lilly, p. 212.

in the *Letters*, let him first observe that cowardliness is a charge which can be much more truly laid against those who, brave by reason of their numbers, and arrogant by reason of the powers conferred upon them by terror, chose to attack an inoffensive mystic in his study, and panted for the opportunity of burning him, as they had but lately served Hermann van Ryswick at the Hague.[1] In Germany, the *Letters of the Obscure Men* had a political influence. The merriment of the German people over the ridicule poured upon the hated ecclesiastics changed into a spirit of active hostility, which many causes of discontent conspired to strengthen. From the very first, therefore, Luther was certain of the popular support when the time came for him to revolt against ecclesiastical authority.[2] Reuchlin, on the contrary, never had any desire to revolt, and the popularity which guarded him from his enemies had come without his seeking. From the time of the papal pronouncement in 1516, the controversy was for him concluded.[3] He had already, in 1513, resigned all the offices he held. His studies were now all that remained to him, and to continue them he asked for peace. In 1517, he published his *De Arte Cabbalistica*, and when his watchful adversaries attacked it, he did not answer. Not even by silence could he now win the peace he desired. Ortuinus Gratius, the victim of the *Letters*, published in 1518 the *Lamentations of the Obscure Men*. As a reply to the *Letters* it was a failure. The work was very poor: its composition displayed a

[1] Hochstraten had assisted at the burning of Van Ryswick, a secular priest, in 1512—Article on "The Roman Index," *Quarterly Review*, October, 1902.

[2] *Edinburgh Review*, p. 193: "Even the friends of Luther, in Luther's lifetime, acknowledged that no writing had contributed so powerfully to the downfall of the papal domination."

[3] Erasmus, at the beginning of 1517, evidently considered the Reuchlin affair at an end, for he then made a collection of the pamphlets issued during the dispute which he lent to his friends—*Eras. Op.*, III, 189E, and Nichols, II, 513.

complete lack of brilliance and power and inventive genius.[1]

Whilst Ortuinus was trying to answer the Reuchlinists his friends continued their assaults upon the old scholar himself.[2] At length, the chief of the German knighthood, Franz von Sickingen, threatened the whole Dominican order in Germany that, if they would not end their hostility to Reuchlin willingly, and pay back to him the costs which he had incurred by the process, the power of the knighthood would be exerted against them.[3] Frightened for once, they submitted in May, 1520, but by that time Pope Leo had terminated the affair by deciding against the great hebraist, thus affording the Dominicans a barren triumph. To Reuchlin it meant a serious loss of money, but nothing more. He had at last obtained peace.[4] To his foes the triumph, such as it was, was perilous and futile. For the German people had by this time found a hero worthy of popularity, and the days were already at hand when the whole ecclesiastical system in Germany would feel the force of the storm that it had itself aroused breaking with violence upon it.

Two years after the papal sentence had been delivered, Reuchlin died. In November, 1520, Erasmus had written to him a letter which sets forth truthfully the appreciation entertained for the old scholar by the best among his contemporaries and the renown which ever since has been attached to the name of John Reuchlin :

> Thy memory, thy fame, are too deeply impressed upon the hearts of the good for the slander of thy adversaries to root them thence. Truth is unconquerable. It will exalt thy name to posterity, even as it makes thee great in the present.[5]

[1] **Maius**, pp. 443-8. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 510-11.

[3] See the ep. of Reuchlin to Pirckheimer, 31st May, 1520—*ibid.*, p. 512.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[5] *Eras. Op.*, III, 590A. In Pastor, VII, 319-25, is a summarized account of the Reuchlinian dispute, which presents a distinctly curialist

And after Reuchlin's death, he let the whole world know the loss it had sustained, and the inherent grandeur of the man, in his colloquy, *Apotheosis Capnionis*.[1]

view of it. It is strange, if Reuchlin or his writings were at any time heretical, Bishop Fisher, and other contemporaries like him, knew nothing of the fact.

[1] Majus, pp. 547 *et seq.*, tells the well-known story of the play enacted before Charles V and his brother Ferdinand, in 1530, wherein Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Luther, kindle a fire, over which Leo X wrings his hands, and which some try to extinguish with a sword and others try to extinguish with oil. Majus concludes the story (and his book) with the quotation of the collect recited by Brassicanus at the close of the *Apotheosis Capnionis*—cp. *Des. Erasmi Roterodami Colloquiorum Familiarium Opus Aureum*, Londini in aedibus Eliz. Flesher, 1676, p. 110.

CHAPTER VII

THE LITERARY ACTIVITIES OF 1515-1516

THE Latin Bible (1452) had been one of the earliest efforts of the new invention of printing, and the Jews had had the Hebrew Old Testament printed in 1488.[1] But no edition of even a single book of the New Testament in its original language appeared until some considerable time after these dates.

Prevalent sentiments of reverence for the text of the Latin Vulgate,[2] and, it may well be supposed, some commendable reluctance to tamper with it, had the effect of causing the first attempts at a study in textual criticism to adopt the form of a Polyglot Bible, wherein the unaltered text of the Vulgate was shown side by side with the other principal versions. Very early in his career, Aldo Manuzio, the famous Italian scholar-printer, had formed the project of issuing in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the entire Old Testament and other inspired Scriptures, according to this plan. But for some reason, at present impossible to ascertain, he discarded an enterprise he had been during many years meditating.[3] The year after Aldo had abandoned the task, it was undertaken by Cardinal Francis Ximenes de Cisneros in honour of the birth of Prince Charles, afterwards Emperor Charles V. Upon the production

[1] Scrivener (F. H. A., LL.D.), *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 3rd edit., Cambridge and London, 1883, p. 351.

[2] Jortin (John, D.D.), *Life of Erasmus*, London, 1808, III, 41.

[3] Firmin-Didot, *Alde Manuce*, pp. 59, 60, 177-80.

of the celebrated Polyglot Bible, called from its place of origin Complutensian (*i.e.*, of Complutum, or Alcalá), the Cardinal expended altogether about fifty thousand ducats of gold, but to his great income that was a small burden. Ximenes was attracted to this work by his own deep love of Holy Scripture, which he read constantly and devoutly,[1] by his conviction that the reading and understanding of the Bible had been neglected too much by ecclesiastics, and by his recognition of the written word of God as the surest safeguard of the truth of the Christian faith.[2] The first volume to be printed (tom. V) was not completed until 1514. In it, the Greek version and the Latin Vulgate were put side by side on each page, with marks of reference from one to the other.[3] Five additional volumes followed so that, at last, just before the death of Ximenes in 1517, the entire work was presented to him in a complete state, though it was not published until 1522.[4]

For several years after Erasmus had given his promise to Colet to devote himself to the study of sacred literature, he had struggled, with only moderate success, to fulfil that promise.[5] At length, whilst at Cambridge, he began a study of the works of St. Jerome, which, soon after, he laid aside, though he did not abandon it,

[1] Fléchier (Messire Esprit, Evêque de Nismes), *Histoire du Cardl. Ximenés*, Amsterdam, 1693, II, 770.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 174-6. It is strange that one who loved the Bible so much should have opposed, as Ximenés did, the excellent ordinance of the Archbishop of Granada for the recitation in the Arabic tongue of the lessons from the Old and New Testaments, which were in the divine Offices, and the Epistles and Gospels in the Mass, for the benefit of Moorish converts—*ibid.*, I, 154-5.

[3] Scrivener, p. 423.

[4] Prescott, III, 289, cites Tiraboschi as stating that the first attempt towards a Polyglot was the publication at Genoa, in 1516, of a Psalter in four of the ancient tongues.

[5] Allen, II, 182, proves conclusively the influence, in this particular, of Colet over Erasmus, and shows that the latter had been engaged in making a version of the New Testament many years earlier than is usually supposed.

for a study of the New Testament. However the chronology of his epistles be arranged, it is noticeable how these two studies alternated.[1] The expectation of publishing the results of his work upon St. Jerome was the particular cause of his seeking the printing-office of Froben at Basle in August, 1514,[2] but once there the place of importance was given to his New Testament, in view of the approaching publication of the Complutensian which scholars throughout Europe were eagerly awaiting. The plan of this latter differed widely enough from that upon which Erasmus had conducted his collation of the New Testament, yet Froben, with the eye of an astute publisher, observed the rare opportunity afforded him by these lucubrations of the Dutch scholar. Whilst the edition of Jerome was put in hands for printing, Erasmus was so urged to hasten the preparation of the New Testament for the printer, that, within a few days of his arrival at Basle, he wrote to Reuchlin for the loan to John Froben of a useful manuscript to assist the work;[3] and, in his subsequent correspondence, he found it necessary to claim the patience of his friends for his rough, or short, epistles, or for his omitting altogether to send replies, on account of the immense toil that now filled his days.[4]

No sooner did it become known that Erasmus was engaged upon this undertaking of not only revising the Greek text of the New Testament—a matter of no serious moment in the opinion of theologians—but also making a new Latin version than conservative theologians felt themselves startled into remonstrance against such piety. It must be remembered that the Latin Vulgate had been the received version of the

[1] Cp. *Eras. Op.*, III, 115B and 135B, C, with 106A and 101D. See also his ep. to Servatius, *ibid.*, 1529C.

[2] Nichols, II, 135, 161; Allen, II, 183 note 20.

[3] Majus, p. 244. He promised that the codex should return untouched and uninjured. The codex was lent and in a later letter Erasmus thanked him—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1558E.

[4] *Ibid.*, III, 1532A, 1551D.

Holy Scriptures in the western Church for a thousand years, and that the sentiments of reverence then usual towards its text did not come into vogue at any recent date, but were themselves the legacy of the ages anterior to Alcuin.[1] What, indeed, Erasmus had set out to perform was little short of a revolution of the mental attitude of his contemporaries towards the text of Holy Writ. One piece of criticism is always liable to suggest another, and, consequently, it is not improbable that, in effecting a change of view regarding the sacred records of the Church, Erasmus assisted somewhat in originating a similar alteration towards the mediæval Church itself. Thus, as Laurentius Valla became the precursor of Erasmus,[2] Erasmus, to some extent, became the precursor of Luther. There can be no doubt but this biblical work of Erasmus, though it forms his *chef-d'œuvre*, was that particular one of all his books which aroused most hatred and malice against him.[3] Accordingly, a friend of Erasmus at Louvain was prevailed upon to express the current ideas of theologians generally on the dangerous course his famous compatriot was pursuing.[4] Martin van Dorp, in fact, claimed to be acting the part of a true friend to Erasmus in delivering a protest, or admonition, against the projected publication. At a later date, Erasmus had occasion to acknowledge the sincerity of Martin van Dorp himself when he gave friendly intentions as the reason for his utterance of the protest against the revision of the New Testament. But Erasmus felt, notwithstanding, that behind Dorp were instigators of less amicable dispositions towards himself;[5] and he did not omit to point out, in his reply to

[1] Scrivener, p. 350; De Laur, II, 283-4. Cp. Berger, *La Bible*, etc., p. 28.

[2] Symonds, *Reviv. of Learning in Italy*, pp. 258-62.

[3] Gasquet, *Eve of Reformation*, p. 176.

[4] Ep. of Dorpius to Erasmus—Jortin, III, 39-42. Nichols, II, 168, dates this ep. October, and Allen, II, 10, September.

[5] *Eras. Op.*, III, 583D.

Dorp, the rather equivocal circumstance that the epistle ostensibly addressed to him, had not been forwarded to him but circulated in the Netherlands, where after six or seven months it came into his hands only by chance.[1]

In the early portion of his epistle Dorp criticized the *Encomium Moriae* and defended the clerical order. In doing so, he uttered many real truths, and none more profound than this: that seriously minded Christians did not, with any unanimity, agree that the book was calculated to do good.[2]

From the *Praise of Folly* Dorp passed to the projected edition of St. Jerome. To this work he gave his cordial approval, but very different was the judgment he expressed upon that other, and more estimable, work which Erasmus was preparing. It was here that Dorp revealed the true purpose of his admonitory epistle:—

> I understand, however, that thou hast corrected the New Testament, and hast added notes in more than a thousand places, for the benefit of theologians. Here once more I desire, in a most friendly way, to act the part of a warning friend. There is no need for me to mention what Laurentius (Valla) and Jacques Lefèvre have accomplished in the same department, for thou, I do not doubt, wilt far surpass them. The matter now in question is that the Holy Scriptures are to be corrected, and Greek codices employed to emend the Latin. . . .
>
> If there should occur a rendering by the Latin translator, whose signification differs from that of a Greek codex, then good-bye to the Greeks, I hold to the

[1] Erasmus (ep. of 10th July, 1516) warmly praised Dorp for exhorting the audience, to whom he was lecturing, to undertake the study of Holy Scripture—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1807F. From this time onwards they became mutually very friendly—*ibid.*, 1631-2E, 331D, 876D.

[2] Jortin, III, 39. Shortly after Erasmus had replied to this ep., Thomas More wrote a long *Apologia pro Moria Erasmi ad Martinum Dorpium* (*Eras. Op.*, III, 1892-1916), which is condemned by Quiroga's *Index* (1601).

Latin, for I cannot persuade myself that Greek manuscripts can be more reliable than the Latin. Augustine, doubtless, prescribed the rule that Latin streams should receive supplies from Greek springs. That suited his own age well, in which the Church had not yet authorized any one Latin version, and the Greek springs had not become impure. This is not the case now. . . .

But doubts will be raised in the minds of some if they, I will not say, learn from thy work, but if they even hear anyone hint that there is the slightest mistake in Scripture. Then that will happen concerning which Augustine wrote to Jerome: "If even copyists' errors be acknowledged to exist in Holy Scripture what authority will it retain?" I am urged by these considerations, dearest Erasmus, to pray and beseech thee, by the mutual friendly relations between us, to which thy absence brings no change, and by thine own natural kindness and honesty, either to correct those books of the New Testament only in which, whilst preserving the signification intact, thou canst suggest a better rendering, or, if thou dost at all notify an alteration in the signification, to answer my arguments in a prefatory epistle. . . .

Farewell, most learned, and to me most dear, Erasmus.

Martin van Dorp wrote his epistle in October, 1514. As has been already observed, Erasmus obtained a copy of it for the first time only when he passed through Antwerp, in the following March, on his way to England for a short visit. He had no time then to reply to it, but immediately on his arrival in London he penned an irrefutable rejoinder.[1]

He began by assuring Dorp that he was not at all offended by his admonitory letter (*jurgatrix epistola*), but rather highly pleased with it, because it proved a

[1] *Eras. Op.*, IX, 2 *et seq.*; Nichols, II, 182. Allen, II, 90, prefers to date this reply from Antwerp in May, on the return of Erasmus from England. It was on its first appearance dated as from that city, and this would indicate that at any rate the final draft for the printer was made at Antwerp.

refreshing change from the numbers of laudatory and flattering epistles constantly arriving from all parts. Erasmus then proceeded to justify his *Moria*. Just as he had already claimed in the preface to that book, so now he maintained that no one person was aimed at, no one class held up to ridicule in it, and only a self-convicted offender would feel injured. The *Moria* was, according to his own assertion, a work which portrayed in quite another aspect what he had dealt with in more serious publications[1]:—

> I have not treated of anything in the *Moria* but what has been already put forth in the *Enchiridion*—the only difference being that in the former it is conducted in an amusing manner. I have desired not to sting but to reprove; not to vex but to benefit; not to harm but to improve the ways of men.

Coming at last to the condemnation of his labours upon the New Testament, Erasmus thus replied :—

> Thou dost not like anything to be altered by me, save in so far as the Greek texts may possibly express the meaning clearer, and thou assertest there is no fault in the version we commonly use. . . . May I ask thee, most learned Dorp (supposing thou writest facts), why Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose have quotations different from what we read? Why does Jerome censure and amend expressly many of the readings in our version? What wilt thou make of so much convergent testimony as this: the Greek texts have different readings which Jerome follows in his quotations, with which the most ancient Latin versions agree, and which suit the sense much better? Wilt thou, treating all this with scorn, hold to a copy of thine probably vitiated by the mistakes of a copyist? . . .[2]
>
> When thou writest that we are not to diverge from this version of ours, approved forsooth by so many

[1] Allen, II, 93 : "Nec aliud agitur in Moria sub specie lusus, quam actum est in Enchiridio. Admonere voluimus, non mordere; prodesse, non laedere; consulere moribus hominum, non officere."

[2] *Ibid.*, 109.

councils, thou art adopting the fashion of the common sort of theologians, who are in the habit of attributing to ecclesiastical authority whatever may, by any chance, have crept into general use. But please name for me any one council wherein this version has been established. No one knows by whom it has been established, or whose it is; the very prefaces of Jerome testify that it is not his. But granted that some council has established it, was the sanction such as to prohibit its ever being corrected according to the Greek originals? Was the sanction such as to cover all the errors that might by any means creep into it? . . .

I do not perceive why thou citest against me these two (Valla and Lefèvre). Dost thou mean to turn me from my work by showing that it has already been executed? Time will prove that I have not without good reason undertaken it after these important men. But perhaps thou meanest that their labours did not commend themselves to theologians? Truly, I do not observe what addition that can make to the old dislike towards Laurentius (Valla). Of Lefèvre I hear nothing but approbation. Why shall I not perform a a business altogether similar to theirs? Laurentius merely accomplished a limited number of annotations, and that, too, in a hasty and sketchy fashion.[1] Lefèvre has published Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles only. He has also translated these according to a method of his own, and if he observed any discrepancy he made a note of it afterwards. I, however, have translated the whole of the New Testament according to the Greek texts, the Greek readings being at once given for the sake of easy reference. . . .

As to the Church, indeed, I am not at all afraid to dedicate my lucubrations to any bishop, cardinal, or even Pope of Rome, if only he be the sort we have now. Finally, I have no doubt that thou thyself wilt send me hearty congratulations, when the book is published (though now thou art admonishing me to refrain from publishing it), provided that thou makest

[1] "In transcursu leuique, quod dici solet, brachio."

> even a slight acquaintance with that literature without which no proper judgment can be formed of these matters. . . .[1]

Probably on his way back to Basle, Erasmus met Dorp and made some arrangement with him about printing the two epistles, the Protest and the Reply, as the most honourable way of correcting the clandestine circulation of the former. They were, accordingly, published at Louvain (October, 1515) as an appendix to a commentary of Erasmus on the Psalm *Beatus Vir*. Dorp supervised the whole production.[2] But Erasmus took care to have his little book preceded by the publication (August, 1515) at Basle of four epistles, for he intended to guard himself from his foes by making it evident to the Christian public that he had the protection or countenance of the highest authorities in the Church. Of these epistles, two had been written by him to Cardinals Grimani and Riario about the time he despatched his reply to Dorp, and another to Pope Leo X a few days later;[3] the fourth was that to Dorp. He had requested Leo's permission to dedicate his work to him. Erasmus rightly judged that the acceptance by the Pope of the dedication of the works of St. Jerome to himself would cast the shadow of papal approval over all his labours. The event manifested his foresight, for Leo not only accorded his full sanction to all the publications executed by Erasmus, but also enclosed in his reply to that scholar a letter to King Henry VIII, containing a recommendation of him to the royal favour.[4] About the same time, Cardinal Riario also sent an answer approving of the revised edition of St. Jerome.[5] So far, therefore, as ecclesiastical authority went, Erasmus had acquired all that he ever could have wished.

Soon after his first arrival at Basle (August, 1514), the humanist had written to Colet an epistle which has

[1] Allen, II, 112, 113. [2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 222C.
[3] *Ibid.*, 143E, 145F, 154B. [4] *Ibid.*, 156F, 157. [5] *Ibid.*, 158B.

not been preserved, but to which the latter replied on 20th October, 1514[1]:—

> All thy friends here are well. Canterbury continues in his customary gentleness, Lincoln now reigns at York, London does not cease to harass me.[2] Day by day I think of my withdrawal and hiding-place among the Carthusians. Our nest is almost ready. When thou dost return to us, as far as I can guess, thou wilt find me there, dead to the world.

A considerable time elapsed before any further communication passed between Colet and Erasmus. The latter was extremely busy in the printing-office of Froben, and replying, or endeavouring to reply, to the numerous letters of greeting and congratulation which he received from correspondents with many of whom hitherto he had no relations whatever. Probably the next interchange of news between the Dean and his friend was delivered by word of mouth, when that now famous scholar paid his short visit to England in the spring of 1515. And when Erasmus had returned to Basle, he entered into that immense two-fold labour of overseeing the edition of the New Testament and St. Jerome, to which he alluded in an epistle to Pirckheimer in October.[3] In December he wrote to the papal nuncio in England (Bishop Caraffa) that the New Testament was almost finished, and somewhat to his own satisfaction, but that he himself was worn out with the toil.[4] On 7th March, 1516—a memorable date in history—Erasmus mentioned to Urbanus Regius, with that undesigned brevity with which tragic or momentous events are often ushered into the world :—

[1] In *Eras. Op.*, III, 1573 the date is given as 1516; but Lupton, *Colet*, p. 215, Seebohm, *Oxford Ref.*, p. 305, Nichols, II, 171, and Allen, II, Ep. No. 314, have decided that the true date is 1514.

[2] That is, Archbishop Warham, Wolsey, and Bishop FitzJames respectively.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1637c.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1534E.

> The New Testament is published. The final colophon is being put to Jerome. Farewell.[1]

His edition of the Greek Testament and the Latin translation (which he, at its first impression, entitled *Novum Instrumentum*) was therefore delivered to the Christian world in March, 1516. The Dedication to Pope Leo was prefixed to it. And now the aim of the companion-work which, for so long a time, conjointly with his biblical studies, had formed the serious occupation of Erasmus, became apparent. For, in order to silence the objections of detractors and to defend himself against all who should charge him with presumption in executing a revision of the Vulgate or with novelty in the doctrines he advocated in this work, he had arranged that the edition of the works of St. Jerome should follow immediately upon that of the New Testament, as a means of proving to all the world that the course he had taken was open to no such accusations, unless indeed his calumniators were prepared to set themselves against the authority of that renowned Father. But the outburst of enthusiasm with which the *Novum Instrumentum* was received precluded the necessity of a defence based upon the sanction of St. Jerome. A typical instance of the sentiments which educated men entertained towards Erasmus's great biblical achievement, is to be found in a letter written to him by Pirckheimer[2]:—

> Thou hast saved thy name from every assault of time, and hast accomplished a matter not only acceptable to God, Great and Best, but also necessary and useful to Christ's faithful people. . . . My two sisters salute thee, the one an Abbess of Sta. Clara, the other a member of the same order. They read thy writings eagerly, but now are, above measure, delighted with the New Testament, by which women, much wiser than some men who fancy themselves rather clever,[3] are profoundly touched.

[1] *Ibid.*, 1554A. [2] *Ibid.*, 1960, E. [3] "Qui sibi scioli videntur."

This letter was written on 20th May, 1516. Before 5th June, Erasmus was able to write to two English friends, Thomas More and Bishop Fisher, that the New Testament was finding greater favour than he had hoped for, even with some whom he had considered likely to have been detractors.[1]

Very soon Erasmus determined upon a new edition. No one knew better than himself the many mistakes overlooked, the numerous blemishes observable, in the first edition; these, indeed, were incidental to it, for the work of recension had been done far too hastily. In April he had written to Ellenbogen[2]:—

> The New Testament has been hurried out headlong rather than edited.

He now begged his friends to help him with their advice regarding whatever errors they might have discovered in the book.[3]

An examination into the MSS. employed by him throughout his different recensions and editions of the Greek text reveals the fact, by no means to be wondered at, that in no case did he use a manuscript of paramount value. The most ancient and serviceable of them was a cursive, perhaps belonging to the tenth or twelfth century,[4] which contained the Gospels, Acts, and Pauline Epistles. An illustration of the difficulties which Erasmus had to surmount is afforded by his treatment of the final six verses of the Apocalypse. Reuchlin's manuscript (Cod. 1 of the Apoc.), which was the only one he used for this book, is deficient in these. Erasmus, therefore, boldly translated them into Greek

[1] *Ibid.*, 380E, and 255F. Even Cardinal Ximenes, part of whose great work had been forestalled by Erasmus, could not refrain—to his lasting honour be it said—from expressing his admiration: "*Utinam*, inquiens, *sic prophetent omnes: tu si potes, adfer meliora, ne damna alienam industriam.*"—*Eras. Op.*, IX, 284C-E (Apol. agst. J. Lopez Stunica).

[2] Nichols, II, 251; Allen, II, 226.

[3] As, for example, William Latimer—*Eras. Op.*, III, 255B.

[4] Scrivener, p. 179; Allen II, 164 *et seq.*

from the Latin.[1] It is not without interest to observe that in two instances Erasmus consulted the precious Codex Vaticanus (B); but owing either to the inconvenience of making references, or to ignorance of its great value, he did not consult it as frequently as he ought to have done.[2]

In passing, we may here remark that, if the MSS. employed by Erasmus to fix the text of his Greek Testament were of small value, so also were those which the Complutensian editors used. They claimed, no doubt, to have received assistance from codices belonging to the Vatican Library, and really did obtain the loan of some which, however, do not appear to have been of any remarkable importance. Biographers of Ximenes have been in the habit of stating that he employed Latin and Greek MSS. that were at least eight hundred years old,[3] but an investigation of the Complutensian readings has disposed of the assignment of any such high antiquity to his authorities.

Erasmus published, in all, five editions of his New Testament (those of 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535), introducing careful emendations into each of them, and availing himself, in the fourth and fifth editions, of the labours of the Spanish scholars.[4]

The boldness which characterized Erasmus's distinctly critical efforts manifested itself also in the Prefaces and Annotations which accompanied the text. In his *Paraclesis*, he expressed his surprise at finding that Plato and Pythagoras, Zeno and Aristotle, had more devoted followers than Christ, and he asserted

[1] Stunica did the same with 1 John v, 7-8 in the Complutensian Polyglot—Scrivener, pp. 432, 653.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 648c; *In Nov. Test. Annot.* (1527), p. 697. See Allen, II, 164-6, for a full account of the MSS. Erasmus used, and the different recensions he made from Latin and Greek codices; cp. also *ibid.* II, 182-4.

[3] Fléchier, I, 178.

[4] It was not until 1522 that Erasmus was able to examine the Complutensian Polyglot—Allen, II, 166.

the truth that Christ is the only teacher from heaven, and alone is capable of teaching all that appertains to salvation, because Himself the Author of it.[1] Christ's philosophy, besides, is to be found in few books, and those easily to be understood. Then, in a bold outburst of candour, he negatived the notions prevalent amongst theologians as to the inadvisability of vernacular translations of the Scriptures.[2] Nor did he omit to declare the benefit arising from an intelligent use of the Scriptures[3]:—

> These present thee with the living image of His most holy mind, and altogether depict Him so completely, speaking, healing, dying, rising again, that if He were actually before thine eyes thou wouldest not more truly behold Him.

Erasmus, in his *Annotations to the New Testament*, continued to exhibit the intrepid candour which is the distinguishing mark of the *Paraclesis*. Rejecting the conventional method of interpretation, he followed closely in the footsteps of St. Jerome, of Valla and Poggio, of Colet and Lefèvre, and, indeed, of all those who are not withheld by some prevalent misconceptions from examining critically into the significance of passages and expressions that require elucidation or correction. Accordingly, even if that were true which has been asserted, that Erasmus did nothing to solve the problems of biblical criticism,[4] he at least initiated that high art, in these *Annotations*, by suggesting it and claiming liberty to engage in it without hindrance.

However great might be the freedom of investigation

[1] *Eras. Op.*, VI, First page of the *Paraclesis*.

[2] *Ibid.*, second and third pages.

[3] *Ibid.*, fourth page.

[4] Dr. R. Y. Tyrrell, in the *Academy* of 5th Sept., 1908, quoting Mark Pattison. As something of a corrective of such an opinion, consult Berger, *La Bible*, etc., chap. IV., *Érasme et la Critique*.

The fourth edition (1527) of the *Annotationes* is that cited here. Erasmus introduced slight changes into each successive edition, but this rather late one may be taken as containing his matured opinions.

which Erasmus permitted himself to exercise in his comments, it is noticeable that dogma came hardly at all within its scope. If there are few dogmatical statements in Colet's Lectures, still fewer are present in Erasmus's *Annotations*. Whoever enters on a study of the latter work with a view to an examination into the opinions of Erasmus upon the received beliefs of his time will find little to reward the labour of investigation. As is true of Colet and Lefèvre, it is always possible to observe, on the one hand, how conservative Erasmus is, how closely he adheres to the authoritative doctrines, and yet, on the other, how he voices shades of thought connected with them that only found full expression in the teachings of the later Protestant reformers. For instance, on the cardinal subject of the Eucharist, he mostly confined himself to quotations from the Fathers, and, even in the passages where he allowed his own sentiments to appear he cautiously restrained himself from the utterance of explicit or full comments.[1] But he spoke at greater length on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and the worship accorded to her, and put forward reasons against the cult.[2] He discussed, and with freedom too, the doubtful value of praying to the Blessed Virgin for her intercession with Our Lord.[3] When he touched on the question of St. Peter's primacy, he not only declined to apply to that apostle Christ's well-known pronouncement, "On this Rock I will build My Church,"[4] but he even called attention to the order in which the Apostles' names were recited by the Evangelists, by way of proof that St. Peter was not "Head of the Apostles."[5]

[1] *In Nov. Test. Annotationes*, ed. of 1527, pp. 97 m., 231 m., and 442-3, 423 m.—*E.g.*, p. 443 end (Com. on. 1 Cor. xi, 26, 27): "Hic palam corpus consecratum panem vocat, non quod adhuc sit panis eo modo quo fuit, sed quod sit panis vivus et vitam conferens veram."

[2] pp. 56, 57. [3] p. 161. [4] p. 68 m.

[5] p. 43 end: "Indicat divus Hieronymus non eodem ordine recenseri Apostolos ab aliis Evangelistis quo a Matthaeo: ne quis ob hoc omnium primum faciat Petrum, quod hic primo loco ponitur."

But, in truth, Erasmus's notes are eminently practical; they treat of the ordinary matters of religion, apart altogether from questions of doctrine. Here we encounter far-off echoes, as it were, of the voice of Folly, save that the satirical and bantering tone has been exchanged for the grave and indignant. Contemporary forms of righteousness draw from him outbursts of bitter dissatisfaction.[1] The superstitious veneration of relics incurs his severe condemnation.[2] He reprimands those Christians who worship saints superstitiously.[3] He disapproves of the ever-increasing number of holy-days and expresses the belief that their fewness would conduce much more to real piety than their multitude.[4] Ceremonial observances, he declares, are dangerously liable to become mechanical and thus obscure the Person of Christ.[5]

We have already noted the extreme caution of Erasmus where common or authoritative Church doctrines were concerned. In two particulars, however, he was, by other considerations, aroused out of his usual reserve. One of these had regard to Matrimony. He did not explicitly say that Matrimony did not constitute a sacrament, but he brought forward an amount of proof for such a judgment sufficient to authorize the conclusion that this was his own conviction.[6]

The second point on which Erasmus uttered an unhesitating opinion was the biblical signification of "repentance." Contrary to the ideas common in his time, he insisted on the truly introspective force of the expression.[7]

In his *Annotations to the New Testament* his stern denunciations of the faults of contemporary ecclesi-

[1] p. 183 beg. [2] p. 88 beg. [3] p. 378 m. [4] pp. 382-3.

[5] p. 625 end: "Qui Mosaicis ceremoniis, Christum tendebant abolere."

[6] p. 549. Like most others of his age, he assigned to virginity the higher place; but he averred, with the earnestness that sprang from experience, that compulsory celibacy tended to evil—see pages 58, 76, 413, 600, and 602.

[7] pp. 17-18, 110 end, 179 m., 270 end, 484, and 503 beg.

astics surpass those contained in the sallies of the *Moria*. Here, instead of witty innuendoes, there are direct charges against them of not teaching faithfully the gospel of Christ but twisting it to their own personal advantage, of being deplorably ignorant of the most essential parts of Christian doctrine, and of wasting time in vain, and occasionally impious, disputations.[1] Their inordinate passion for this world's honours, wealth, and power was exposed to the reproaches of a Christian public which had long since grown impatient of it.[2]

No doubt it was by way of admonition to the self-appointed critics of his own doings that he declared the clergy altogether too fond of condemning as heresy whatever appeared strange or new to them, without assigning any sufficient reason for the reprobation.[3]

Divine worship, in the opinion of Erasmus, was not conducted as it should be. Like some other enlightened men of that epoch, he perceived that prayers without any intelligent signification to the worshippers resolved themselves into pious incantations. Apparently, he desired, as Lefèvre and many others did,[4] that all prayers and divine offices should be conducted in the native language of the worshippers.

At all times, in season and out of season, Erasmus expressed acrimonious censures upon the monastic orders. Formerly the protectors and guardians of erudition they had now become its gaolers and oppressors; the age of their practical worth to the

[1] pp. 87 beg., 395 end, and 496 m.; 283 m., 307 beg., and 630 m.; and 593-5.

[2] pp. 88 m., 282 end, 434 end, 462 beg., 683 end; cp. also p. 274-5.

[3] pp. 301 beg., 311 m., 313 end, 480 beg.

[4] pp. 451-2 (Com. on 1 Cor. xiv, 19): "Quid aliud auditur in monasterijs, in collegijs, in templis fermè omnibus, quàm uocum strepitus? . . . Nunc vulgus quid aliud audit quàm uoces nihil significantes, & talis est ferè pronunciatio, ut nec uoces exaudiantur, sonitus tantum feriat."

Rabelais, some years later, in his facetious account of Pantagruel's visit to the Île Sonnante, alluded to the unintelligible chanting of psalms in Latin by monks and clergy—see Fleury, *Rabelais*, II, 202-6.

Church was well-nigh at an end.[1] Their lives also lay peculiarly open to many sorts of temptation, and only too frequently they exhibited manifest tokens of their frailty. Accordingly, the reproofs which Erasmus meted out to the monks and friars contained a mordant piquancy that was absent from the chiding which he administered to the bishops and clergy of the period. In numerous passages he blamed the regulars for their greed and rapacity; for their superstitious, so-called religious exercises; for their evil methods of recruiting their orders; for their empty, worthless sermons; for their claims to an extraordinary sanctity, of which no visible signs existed; for their laziness under pretext of religion; for the absolute hollowness and falsity of their "religion," in the meaning they attached to the word; and, finally, for the dishonourable measures they adopted to secure legacies and bequests.[2]

Not the least remarkable of the topics which Erasmus handled with candour and unreserve was the Papacy: the authority, privileges, and powers attached to the office, and the qualities which the occupants of that see ought to possess. In one long note he reviewed various changes made by popes in the apostolic precepts, and propounded the exceedingly pertinent question, "Have they erred in so doing?"—a question to which Erasmus appeared inclined to deliver a conditionally affirmative reply. As the cases cited included both the definition of the mode of the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, known as Transubstantiation, and the power of granting dispensations in matrimonial causes, it will be seen how daring was his frankness.[3]

But the gravest sentence he pronounced upon the

[1] Antony Meray, in his extremely interesting little work *Les Libres Prêcheurs*, puts the final date of their active influence in the reign of Henry IV. We think he could have fixed a much earlier limit.

[2] *In Nov. Test. Annot.* (1527), pp. 31, 33, 88, 89, 92, 152, etc.

[3] pp. 423-32. Erasmus, it is true, is not here seeking to cast odium on the papal see, but his condemnatory opinions are none the less powerful on that account.

papal claims which the curialists of his day were putting forth forms part of his comment *Non ad destructionem* on 2 Cor. x, 8.

> This passage should be noted by those who exaggerate inordinately the authority of the Pontiff, and maintain that the whole body of Christ's Church owes such allegiance to this one man that if he were to draw all souls to hell, none would have the right to oppose him. Paul received his apostolic authority from Christ Himself, not from St. Peter . . . and yet he nobly confesses that it was conferred upon him not to injure anyone but to benefit. And it would be well if those who in these times attribute tremendous powers to the Roman Pontiff were able also to attribute to him the rest of the pontifical gifts, such as wisdom, purity, charity, and disregard of worldly glory and riches.[1]

These few particulars drawn from Erasmus's most celebrated work will perhaps suffice to reveal its nature and scope. We observe that it was no part of his design to contest the dogmas, or discredit the authority, of the Church. His paramount aim was to commend to the Christian public the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and, because these constituted the written word of God, to restore them to the most correct form possible, so that all readers might feel assured that they had before them a truly reliable narrative of the actual utterances and teaching of Our Lord and His Apostles. At the same time, it is also quite evident that, consciously or unconsciously, he had a further desire, viz., to set before his contemporaries the character and doctrines of the primitive Church, to institute comparisons between the teachers and clergy of his own day and those of earlier ages—in short, to lead back the Church to ideals of thought and practice more accordant with the precepts of Christ, her Lord and Founder. It is quite noticeable that, in most of his works, both

[1] p. 494 m. This passage, and many others of those cited above are condemned in Quiroga's *Index Expurgat.* (1601).

serious and satirical, in his *Enchiridion*, *Adagia*, and New Testament, as well as in his *Colloquies* and *Praise of Folly*, he appears always unable to repress his dissatisfaction with the condition of Christianity in his day. This, however, might have been accounted mere peevishness, on the part of Erasmus, if there were not clear indications that the causes of it lay deeper, and that it signified, in fact, an anxious desire to do something to rectify what he considered disordered. So far he was entirely at one with all those who sought to reform the Church upon Catholic lines. Fisher, More, Colet, Beatus Rhenanus, and the rest, were delighted at the production of the New Testament and its Annotations, for they regarded it as the best means of effecting a Catholic reformation. Moreover, some of those who quarrelled with it did so because it was truly this. But not all of them. It is undoubtedly surprising to observe that both Lefèvre and Luther—in those early days of that German professor's career when he was a sincere Catholic at heart, if a reformer by inclination—did not accord the great work the same joyful applause which it received in so many other quarters. There was a definite reason for their coldness, which it is not hard for us to elucidate. Erasmus's book, in their estimation, went far beyond the limits needed for the work of Catholic reform. He himself repeatedly protested that he had followed in the footsteps of Valla and Lefèvre, and he spoke truthfully. But he had surpassed them. Like Lefèvre, he was an expositor of the Bible, and, in this capacity, he excelled the Frenchman. He was also a textual critic, and as such he parted company with his two models, for he not only went beyond Lefèvre, but pursued so closely along the lines laid down by Valla that eventually he outstripped the Italian humanist. Thus he became, in actual fact, the founder of a new and noble art that has discovered much that is useful and true, but has, nevertheless, sanctioned some audacious extravagancies. The germs

of these two modes of biblical criticism lay hidden in Erasmus's great production. We would not go so far as M. Durand de Laur in hinting at the existence of scepticism in the mind of Erasmus himself.[1] Erasmus certainly proceeded in his criticism with the freedom of a modern German textualist; and, therefore, he comprehended in his character the carping insubmissiveness of a fifteenth century humanist and the independence of a present-day Higher Critic.[2] But he always opposed the assertions of those who charged him with want of deference either to the sacred records or to constituted authority, and there can be no reasonable doubt that he was sincere in his defences. His critics, often captious and unjust, and at all times dangerous to his personal safety, nevertheless penetrated much more accurately than Erasmus himself to the inevitable consequences of one part of his labours.[3] Probably to no pioneer is the future prophetically revealed, and Erasmus was nothing else than an initiator. It is quite unfair of moderns to ascribe to him the temerities of a later age, to which indeed he opened the way, but of which he had no thought of being the author.

Peaceful as it was, 1516 proved to be an eventful year. Books which have made a profound impression upon the modern world issued at this time from the press. Their number was not great, but their influence on human thought has not yet reached finality. Of these, the greatest, Erasmus's *Novum Instrumentum*, has just been discussed. This was followed by some other works, secondary, no doubt, in moral rank and authority, but still of unquestionable importance and value. All these books, even when they treat of different topics, possess one eminent characteristic in

[1] *Érasme, Précurseur et Initiateur de l'Esprit Moderne*, Paris, 1872, II, 284: "Érasme ne fut-il pas dans une certaine mesure le précurseur et le père du scepticisme moderne?"

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 285.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, chap. V, especially pp. 207-12.

common. They concur in giving expression to the new ideas and thoughts which at that period were circulating among the learned and beginning to pass from them into general acceptance. One notable work of this date was the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More. Under this title the ideal commonwealth, which the author depicted in his treatise, has become famous; but More at first called it *Nusquama*, and that was the name by which Erasmus, in the early days of its existence, knew it. Before the book, however, was handed to the printer, the title was altered to *Utopia* as being more euphonious. The first edition appeared at Louvain in November, 1516.

Although it is possible to find traces of the opinions of Plato and Epicurus in the work,[1] for the most part the fiction is original.

The *Utopia* is composed in two books, and, considering what a prolix (even tedious) letter-writer More was, the treatise is remarkably concise and interesting throughout.

The main subjects treated of in the first book embodied the views of More himself regarding the state of England and King Henry's policy, but he delivered them as the opinions of Raphael, the supposed traveller who had visited the strange land called Utopia. During Cardinal Morton's time, thieves had abounded in England because large numbers of soldiers had been disbanded, retainers cast out of employment, and farmers and labourers ejected from their holdings to make room for sheep-runs. To have provided employment, restored tillage-farming, and substituted penal labour for hanging, in cases of theft, would have been a more effectual method of putting down robbery than the imposition of excessively harsh punishments.[2] He

[1] Warner (F., LL.D.), *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Thos. More, with the History of Utopia*, London, 1758, pp. 57, 65-6, 72 *et seq.*, 132-4; *Thomae Mori*, etc., *Lucubrationes et Vita*, Basil., 1563, pp. 34, 40-1, 45 *et seq.*, 91 *et seq.*

[2] Warner, pp. 26-38; *Th. Mori. Luc.*, pp. 13-20.

declared his invincible antipathy to the expansion of territorial empire,[1] all tampering with the currency, levying war-taxes when no war was in contemplation, exacting penalties under laws long obsolete, granting licences for much money in respect of things prohibited, and attaching judges to the royal interest.[2] He maintained that a king's honour and safety rests more upon his people's wealth than his own; that it were far better for a king to abdicate than to retain his throne by means of threats, exactions, confiscations, or his people's impoverishment; that a king should keep his expenditure within his income, and should enact good laws of a kind that would prevent crime.[3]

Though the second book is an imaginative description of a non-existent race, it were perhaps best to view it as an exhaustive illustration in practice of the ideals proposed in the first book. That it constituted a gentle satire on the European practices of that time is quite true, but we doubt if More intended it for satire. Its purpose lies too deep, its doctrines are too fundamental, its humanitarianism too benevolent to leave any opportunity for lapsing into a prolonged satirical vein. Here and there, indeed, the subjects dealt with required either a plainness of speech which More believed would not be agreeable to the character of his work, or a degree of irony which he feared, if untempered, would imperil the beneficial effect he desired to accomplish. Accordingly, he used sarcasm in so gentle a manner that none but the most irritable and suspicious of mankind could find fault, and even these would experience no little difficulty in explaining their resentment or laying claim to public sympathy.[4]

[1] Warner, pp. 60-1; *Th. Moti. Luc.*, pp. 36-7.

[2] Warner, pp. 62-5; *Th. Mori. Luc.*, pp. 37-9.

[3] Warner, pp. 66-9; *Th. Mori. Luc.*, pp. 40-3.

[4] Warner, p. 175; *Th. Mori. Luc.*, p. 121. Cp. More's words with those of Erasmus—*Op.*, II, 869-73 ("Scarabeus aquilam quaerit"). On war also More, Erasmus, and Colet were in agreement—cp. Warner, p. 177; *Eras. Op.*, III, 123-4, 461; *Enchir.*, Can. VI.

The ideas which More propounded in his observations on the condition of life of the labouring classes in England, during his own time, were unusually courageous and frank, but not more so than the occasion warranted. By describing the constitutions of the Utopians, he condemned the extremely long hours of labour, the comfortless existence and unwholesome mode of living, the anxiety for the future, and the excessive toil, which formed the lot of the servant, the mechanic, and the peasant in England. He thought that the State should endeavour to ameliorate their condition,[1] and, to render this feasible, the national wealth could be utilized. Official duties had given More practical experience of the topics he touched upon in these suggestions. His advice, consequently, derived all the greater cogency from the contrast he instituted between the wretched, sometimes even squalid, mode of life in England, and the happy, peaceful, contented existence of the Utopians.

Much of what More hinted at has been the subject of consideration during the centuries which have elapsed since he wrote his curious romance. Some ills have been mitigated, and, for the alleviation of others, better methods of administration have been established. It cannot be thought possible that More himself ever intended it to be taken as his deliberate opinion that the Utopian ideals ought to be, down to the smallest detail, put in practice.[2] Nevertheless, every age will readily acknowledge that the part of the *Utopia* which reflects most honour upon him, because of his philanthropic instincts, the largeness of his heart, and the sagacity of his intellect, is that division of the second book in which

[1] Warner, pp. 223-4.

[2] Perhaps this is what More means by these words which occur towards the conclusion of the *Utopia*: "Though it must be confessed that he (Raphael) is both a very learned man, and a person who has obtained a great knowledge of the world, I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related."—Warner, p. 229.

he portrayed what he regarded as the perfect conditions of human existence.

The chief topic of debate in the moral philosophy of the Utopians More stated to be the discussion of "happiness." By this term they meant the pursuit of pleasure in the light of religion and reason.[1] We cannot but think that More was here seeking to administer a corrective to the extravagances of religious asceticism and the false notions of religious self-denial then prevalent, on the one hand, and to the iniquities of selfishness and sin on the other.

Probably to no part of More's remarkable production are we more attracted than to that in which he gave an account of the system, or rather systems, of religion in Utopia, because we naturally expect to find there some unusual tokens of the author's genius and perhaps some indications of his opinions. We are not disappointed. The treatise, as a whole far from ordinary, unfolds in this division its most singular and original ideas. One religious tenet, the belief in a Supreme Being, the Utopians held in common, however much they might differ in other particulars.[2] All sects gathered into one vast assembly for the great act of public worship, to join together in prayers of thanks to Almighty God which were suited to all.[3] For this special service of God no images of any kind were used, nor any prayers save those which would be acceptable to all. Utopus, who had appointed this form of public worship, made these regulations in order to emphasize the essential unity of the commonwealth.[4] At the same time, he left every sect at liberty to practise its own distinctive rites and to exercise its own peculiar devotions in private. It was contrary to the laws of Utopus that anyone

[1] Warner, pp. 133-9; *Th. Mori. Luc.*, pp. 92-5.

[2] Warner, pp. 195-6.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 218-20.

[4] Cp. *Eras. Op.*, III, 1528c: "Quanto magis est Christi sententia, totum orbem Christianum unam domum, et velut unum habere Monasterium, omnes Canonicos et confratres putare."

should be punished for his religious opinions. All were allowed to propagate their views by argument and reason, but any attempt to use other means was liable to banishment on the ground that it imperilled the peace and good order of the commonwealth, and was detrimental to the best interests of religion. Utopus had held that, if one religion and one only were true, its own truth, its own genuineness, would ultimately prevail, provided that quiet persuasion and the interchange of ideas were the only methods adopted for advancing it.[1] Accordingly, even atheists were tolerated in Utopia, though never entrusted with any public office.[2]

The Utopian priesthood was not the least strange appointment in that imaginary society. The priests were few in number, thirteen altogether, with one as head over the rest. It was possible for a woman to be a " priest " ; but that happened very seldom, and only an elderly woman was ever chosen to that office. They were elected " as other magistrates were," by the secret suffrage of the people. Their duties included the conduct of public worship, the inspection of public morals, and the supervision of education.[3] Great honour was paid to them, but, being men of eminent piety, they merited it.[4] More represented Raphael as explaining how he and his companions introduced Christianity into Utopia, in consequence of which a question arose among that people whether they could not elect the Christian priesthood in the same way as the Utopian, and make valid appointments without any further authority being consulted,[5] " and they seemed to be resolved to choose some for that employment; but they had not done it when I left."

Among this curious race, those who from a religious motive undertook disagreeable and laborious tasks were accorded a special degree of respect. To certain

[1] Warner, pp. 197-201. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 202. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 208-12.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 211-4. [5] *Ibid.*, pp. 197-8.

others, who, on similar grounds, abstained from the married state and lived an ascetic life, was given a high measure of esteem, and their celibacy was regarded as the holier condition. But, for all that, the Utopians considered that the persons who married and fulfilled the ordinary duties, and enjoyed the simple pleasures of life, were the wiser sort.[1]

Such is a brief analysis of a book which would have been noteworthy at any time, but its public appearance immediately after the *Novum Instrumentum*, by connecting it with that great work, enhanced its intrinsic value. And, indeed, we cannot fail to notice that, whilst Erasmus's important production was calculated to satisfy, in a large degree, the spirit of thoughtful inquiry which was manifesting itself throughout western Christendom, More's serious romance had a department of its own in the task of ministering to the requirements of the age. For the desire, with which he ended his book, did not remain peculiar to himself; he merely uttered a pious aspiration concerning what many of his contemporaries soon began to deliberate of their own accord[2]:—

> However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia, that I rather wish, than expect, to see followed in our Governments.

It is manifest that a deeply benevolent regard for the temporal and eternal welfare of his fellow-men urged More to compose this work. We cannot avoid observing that the *History of Utopia* had in view a fundamental object which was, in the purest sense, philanthropic. The *Praise of Folly* had sought to combat the evils of the times by ridicule, the *Letters of the Obscure Men* by sarcasm. Erasmus's New Testament, on the contrary, had gone forth, in the restorative power of the Gospel

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 207-8.

[2] *Th. Mori. Luc.*, p. 159: "Ita facilè confiteor, permulta esse in Vtopiensium republica, quae in nostris ciuitatibus optarim uerius, quàm sperarim."

of Christ, to teach and correct, to edify and renovate. On this noble mission, it was worthily followed by the *Utopia*, a book distinctly counselling, by means of its suggestions, integrity in everyday life, sincerity in faith, and purity in religion. Here were to be found no mockery at the low state of contemporary morality, no jibes at the numerous failures from the Christian standard, but a sorrowful pity that such things should be, and an anxious longing for their future betterment.

With a somewhat similar intention, Erasmus, about the middle of 1516, produced his *Institution of a Christian Prince*.[1] The treatise, which he addressed in the first instance to Prince Charles, lately become a powerful monarch by the decease of his grandfather Ferdinand, presented to all Christian princes the highest ideal of a ruler who lived, not for his own benefit, but for the good of his people.[2]

A close connection in ideas and opinions is observable between the *Institutio* of Erasmus and the *Utopia* of Thomas More, a connection which will become still more evident, if it be remembered that the former book was begun at a time when the two authors had frequent intercourse,[3] and, in all probability, no little debate on the matters treated of in both of these publications. The *Utopia*, subsequent to the *Institutio* in time of composition, expressed similar thoughts, but differed from that work in its purpose, and therefore in its entire character. Erasmus's treatise exhibited abstract principles of action suitable for the guidance of every Christian prince and the information of all Christian

[1] The *Institutio Principis Christiani* was published in August, 1516, the *History of Utopia* in November, both at Louvain.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, IV, 567E: "Non alio officio potes magis tibi conciliare Deum, quam si populo salutarem praestes Principem." Erasmus added, *ibid.*, 579B, D, and 612A, that to govern as a Christian monarch, far from lessening, would increase the power of authority and place it upon secure foundations.

[3] See the ep. to Cardinal Grimani, *Eras. Op.*, III, 144A: "Est in manibus libellus de instituendo Principe, quem illustrissimo Carolo Archiduci Burgundiae, Maximiliani nepoti, destinavimus."

subjects. From the nature of its advice, and the manner in which that advice was imparted, the *Institutio* was only acceptable to the thoughtful and the learned. More's book delivered the same message to Christian Europe, but, as it dealt chiefly with the actual facts of life in England, it laid down practical principles, or rather, reduced the abstract principles of Erasmus to the everyday requirements of life in a Christian state, and clothed all in the attractive garb of fiction. For these reasons, the *Utopia* attained an immediate fame it has never lost. Thousands have read it, and possibly generations still to come will read it, with avidity. It touches, and that shrewdly, upon so many of the profound issues of national and ecclesiastical polity, of the reciprocal benefits which accrue to all men when the relations between them are rightly adjusted, that it will never reach an age when its admonitions will be obsolete. Besides, More has displayed his opinions in such unassuming and engaging forms that even those of his own time who might have had some reason to believe themselves or their office assailed, could not feel much resentment or avow serious injury. The popularity of the *Utopia* is, therefore, not inexplicable. Very different was the fate of Erasmus's book. Its serious tone, its erudite form, its direct enunciations of principles—honourable and Christian, but little in accordance with the usages of the period—rendered it dull and tedious, and consequently conspired to make its popularity impossible. In fact, it is probable that even the prince to whom it was dedicated (Charles V) never read it.[1]

Perhaps it is not too much to say that no books of that epoch have been so modern in thought and teaching as the two just mentioned. Most of the others

[1] See Villari, *Machiavelli*, bk. II, chap. V. De Laur, II, 460 *et seq.*, gives an excellent summary of Machiavelli's doctrines, which differed so widely from both More's and Erasmus's, but proved more attractive to Charles.

retain an antiquarian or historical interest and value. Just a few, such as the *Praise of Folly* and the *Letters of the Obscure Men*, may be shown to reflect traits of human nature common in our times. And all the best parts of Erasmus's biblical labours, of Lefèvre's exegesis, of Colet's instructions, have long since been absorbed into the broadening stream of theological learning. But the doctrines of these two treatises on the governance of Christian states, conceived as they were in the spirit of liberal and enlightened Christianity, still enter into the dreams of the modern philanthropic statesman. Our latest generations have witnessed many highly commendable changes in the mode of life of the poorer classes—better house accommodation, improved sanitation, more humane provision for the sick, the needy, and the aged, amelioration of the conditions and hours of labour, and so on. Within the same recent period have taken place the abatement of religious intolerance, and the encouragement of a much more salutary phase of religious thought among the Churches, viz., the desire of corporate reunion as a means of fulfilling the prayer which the Saviour uttered before His Passion; the efforts to establish tribunals of arbitration for all kinds of disputes, national and international; the attainment, in a large degree, of the proper relations between rulers and their subjects. These advancements in fraternal kindliness and goodwill are outlined in the *Institutio* and the *Utopia*, although the modern advocates of public philanthropy may not be aware of this. But we must also note, that the socialistic reformer and the promoter of communism will find in the *Utopia* the major portion of their theories. Observe, therefore, how entirely modern, or at least how consonant with modern ideas, are the teachings which Erasmus and More set forth in the two notable works published by them in 1516.[1]

[1] Nisard, pp. 178-9: "L'Utopie, c'est cet idéal du bien absolu que caressent à toutes les époques certains esprits honnêtes ou impatients,

Budé had, in March, 1515, produced a great book in which were included the aspirations of the Humanist, the Patriot, and the Christian. As its title, *De Asse*, indicates, it purported to be a treatise on the value of money in ancient Rome and Greece. Many of Budé's decisions on ancient money-values have been revised or exploded, and his book as a scientific work has shared the fate of all pioneer labours.[1] Its historical importance yet remains, and to this must be assigned a high appraisement. That very portion of the book, its lengthy digressions, which, at the date of its issue, detracted from its eminence as a scientific publication, is now the only part which maintains, and will ever maintain, a real interest for modern students. These fall into three divisions.[2] In the first, he defends the cause of humanism, and censures the indifference or hostility of the French nobles and clergy towards the study of ancient literature. In the second, he propounds the claim of Frenchmen to be considered no less capable of attaining a high level of literary culture than the Italians, a claim which found its earlier justification in his own erudition and that of several of his contemporaries, and its later in the glories of Dolet,[3] du Bellay, and the school of Ronsard.[4] The third division contains his observations, at once Catholic and liberal, upon the prevalent state of religion. Here, once more, the impatience which men profoundly devout felt at the blemishes of the existing systems of doctrine and practice in the ecclesiastical world, reveals itself. When

qui ne savent pas voir le bien relatif dans le monde où ils vivent." See also *ibid.*, p. 185.

[1] Delaruelle, *Guillaume Budé*, pp. 156-7.

[2] The particulars here given regarding the *De Asse* and the quotations from it are taken from chapters V and VI of Delaruelle's *Budé*. The *De Asse* appears on Quiroga's *Index Expurgat.* (1601).

[3] Boulmier (Joseph), *Estienne Dolet, sa vie, ses œuvres, son martyre*, Paris, 1857, chap. XI, p. 175 *et seq.*

[4] Darmesteter & Hatzfeld, *Le Seizième Siècle en France*, 7me. édit., Paris, s. a., sect. II, chap. II, pp. 96-146.

he had condemned in detail the idleness, luxury, ostentation, and avarice of the clergy, and had exposed the evils of the ecclesiastical courts and the reprehensible practice of granting, to such as were ready to pay well, facilities for obtaining indulgences for their faults and immunities from the penalties imposed by the laws of the Church,[1] Budé proceeded to utter warnings which the events of a few years later showed to have been prophetic. He pleaded earnestly for a general improvement in ecclesiastical affairs, but was opposed to the employment of drastic measures, because he believed they were unsuited to the times.[2] Yet he fully recognized the urgent necessity of reform, for no one more clearly expressed in regard to that matter the views of the thoughtful among western Christians of the age.[3]

"He speaks with piety of pious things, and the liveliness of his critical genius never does violence to the fervour of his religious beliefs."[4] What has thus been well said concerning Budé could have been, no less justly, asserted of one who had impressed with his own devout and conservative Christian hopes and longings the minds of all with whom he came in touch. Perhaps, too, it was from the influence of Lefèvre d'Étaples, humanly speaking, that Guillaume Budé derived that other noble characteristic which, issuing from the heart of the humanist, ended by dominating all his faculties, namely, his unwavering loyalty to the Christian faith. For his was an era in which the cultivators of antiquity too often blended their Christianity with the long-

[1] *De Asse*, p. 727.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 721: "Duntaxat quantum ferre ratio huius aetatis potest, neque enim ad uiuum ulcera in corpore tam delicato resecanda censeo."

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 718 and 728: "Sed enim (quod dicere coeperamus) status ciuitatis orthodoxae e sede seueritatis et disciplinae conuulsus manum quandam Paeoniam (that is, a physician's hand) poscit, ut apte et placide in eam reponatur, luxataque ecclesiae membra in artus suos aliquando redeant."

[4] Delaruelle, pp. 188-9.

forgotten paganism of the Greek and Roman mythologies, and so enveloped all Christian things in a classic garb as to impair their fidelity to the religious system of their childhood and to widen the breach already made by their detractors between literary culture and religion. It was of inestimable value, at such a juncture, that Budé should have demonstrated, in his own person, the perfect amity which subsists eternally between Christian piety and all true knowledge, and the benefits which these reciprocate. Here, within the pages of an avowedly humanistic work, the standard of moral teaching is not derived from the stores of classic examples, but from the doctrines of the Lord Jesus.[1] If Budé proclaimed the inability of the pagan philosophers to attain to wisdom, he based his statement on their ignorance that God alone is the dispenser of it.[2] When he wished to indicate the source of the highest type of wisdom, he pointed not to the works of Aristotle, Plato, or Seneca, or to the relics of any of the old sages, but to the pages of Holy Scripture.

The fundamental ideals of Budé, the conceptions which prompted him to find fault with the irregularities of the Church, and to demand the reconstruction and reanimation of the life of piety, are adequately described in these words of his biographer :[3]—

> The philosophy of which Budé speaks is, as one can easily see, religious knowledge, or indeed theology, in the original signification of the word. So philology points the way to theology; intercourse with divine things is the natural complement, and, as it were, the

[1] See, for instance, *De Asse*, p. 713.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 737 : " Existimabant enim non ex deo sed ex sese ita aptum sapientem esse, ut in eo plane situm esset an ipse talis esset. Nos autem ex sacris monumentis accepimus arbitrium tantum nostri iuris esse, rectam autem firmamque animi constitutionem muneris esse diuini, sed ita promiscui, ut nulli recte atque ordine id petenti negetur." Of this passage Dr. Delaruelle (p. 193) very truly remarks : " C'est ici la pure doctrine chrétienne de la grâce."

[3] Delaruelle, pp. 194-5.

> crown of what Budé terms "the encyclopædia"; and the human mind, rising from height to height, advances freely from pagan to Christian wisdom. . . . Perhaps, in order to be quite fair (*i.e.*, to Budé's theory), one must recollect the miserable state of decay into which theological studies had then fallen. The renascence of ancient learning had the power to revive the senile organism of scholastic philosophy; the knowledge of Greek was able to recall the doctors to the direct study of the sources of religion. At least this is that for which Budé hoped.

But, indeed, that French *savant* had already advanced far beyond mere hopes, for, in his earlier work, the *Annotations to the Pandects*, he had inserted a digression in which he urged the necessity of a collation of the text of the Latin Vulgate with the original Greek, and condemned the present insensate opposition to such an indispensable necessity.[1]

We observe in the books published during 1515-16, of which some particulars have been given above, a mingling of the religious questions of the day with the political and economic. Such a combination might have proved incongruous, if these varied subjects of discussion had not possessed a social side of no little importance, which precluded the possibility of representing them as the concern of individuals only. Society, indeed, has peculiar interests of its own which belong to it as a corporate entity. Every problem that arises, in relation to the conditions of man's present existence, exhibits not only personal but public aspects. No doubt, the advantage of the individual may be so emphasized as to cause serious detriment to the general good; and this circumstance, whenever and wherever it occurs, is always regrettable, because its ultimate

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-8. The passage in question (*Annotationes in Pandectas*, p. 150) has reference to an opening verse in St. Luke x, where a deviation of the Latin version from the sense of the original becomes the occasion of an energetic protest by Budé against the foolish ignorance of the obscurantists.

effect is to disconnect the manifold departments of human energy and thus render impossible corporate action and progress. In every case of the kind, the loss which the social being has to bear far outweighs the gain which the individual has obtained; all true expansion and growth, terrestrial as well as celestial, proceeds, by ordinance of the Almighty, upon general or corporate, not upon particular or individual lines. Where the external (or social) life of man is in question, religion, economics, and politics are not to be deemed mutually exclusive; they are, in truth, co-operative. At the time when Erasmus, More, and Budé wrote their books, reform was a subject of general consideration; not reform in spiritual matters only, but in secular also. The mercantile, legal, military, medical, executive, and religious departments, all of them affecting the welfare of society, were manifestly defective. Disorder had entered into Church and State alike, and, in the search for nobler ideals of both, the serious thinkers of the age had gone back to primitive times.[1]

[1] Remark the following words taken from the prefatory epistle which Erasmus affixed to his edition of Suetonius (dated by Allen, II, 579, 5th June, 1517), and addressed to the two Dukes of Saxony, Frederick and George: "Verus & unicus orbis Monarcha Christus est, in cuius edicta si nostri Principes consenserint, sub uno Principe vere florebunt universa." —*Eras. Op.*, III, 328c. One is reminded of Savonarola's "King of Florence."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNINGS OF LUTHER

THE popularity which Reuchlin had found somewhat embarrassing fell to Martin Luther, and was welcomed by him at a critical juncture in his life. There were, undoubtedly, fundamental differences between the two as regarded both their dispositions and their careers. One had been brought up under the shadow of a court and attached to the services of noblemen from very early years. Reuchlin, in fact, represented the cultured Christian layman, the advocate, and the courtier. Luther, on the contrary, was a child of the people ;[1] he belonged to them and understood them. He had had no previous acquaintance with the great ones of his country, when he stood, an abashed theologian, with a nervous smile upon his face, before the Emperor and the princes of the Diet at Worms. Moreover, the contests in which they became involved were dissimilar in scope and object ; that of Reuchlin concerned the freedom of scholarship, that of Luther was essentially (unquestionably so at its inception, whatever may be thought of its later developments) one of religious principle. The German public, already favourably inclined to Reuchlin, although he was fighting the battle of learned Germans only, ranged up enthusiasti-

[1] Köstlin, *Martin Luther*, I, 49. Among the humanists of Erfurt, Luther classed himself as "rusticus iste Coridon, Martinus, inquam, barbarus, et semper inter anseres strepere solitus." See his ep. to Conradus Mutianus, 29th May, 1516, in *Lutheri Epistolae* (Jhenae), fol. 16vo., and De Wette, I, 21-2.

cally on the side of Luther when it perceived that he was defending not merely the opinions or the rights of one or more classes of his countrymen, but what appeared to be the interests of all. There was, therefore, nothing singular in the circumstance which Aleander discovered at Worms, namely, that Germany was " a land where every stone and every tree cried out, Luther,"[1] where the simple monk of Wittemberg had more real power than the Emperor himself.[2]

This remarkable man was born at Eisleben in 1483, brought up in Mansfeld, and educated as a poor scholar at Eisenach for three years. At the age of 18, Luther entered the University of Erfurt, intending to adopt the profession of a lawyer. Here he proceeded in regular course to his M.A. degree (1505), and was about to begin the serious study of Law, when, to the amazement of his friends and the displeasure of his father, he suddenly joined the order of Augustinian Eremites in Erfurt (summer of 1505). Although much has been written upon the subject, and many conjectures, more or less plausible, have been advanced, the motive which prompted him to take this momentous step in his career is not well understood. It does not accord with our present purpose to examine closely into the reasons for Luther's action. Let it suffice to remark that apparently there were two causes for his adopting a course all the circumstances of which prove it to have been unpremeditated. One was the intensity of his religious convictions. Severe lessons of piety had been taught him in childhood ; and, consequently, he had grown up in possession solely of austere views of religion and its duties. It was natural to him, therefore, to regard Divine Justice as altogether stern and inexorable. Profoundly conscious of the gravity of the issues at stake where the soul of man is concerned, and doubting of his ability to accomplish the work of

[1] Lindsay, *Hist. of Reformation*, I, 262-3.
[2] Armstrong, *Charles V*, I, 67-73.

his soul's salvation in the world,[1] he felt drawn, as did Thomas More about the same time in England, towards the life of the cloister as the only solution of the spiritual difficulty. The other was the sudden death of a companion. By its unexpectedness and awfulness this event exerted a powerful influence over Luther and urged him to perform that which his inclination had long suggested.[2] If these two causes be well considered it will be seen how they fit together and explain everything.

Luther's later history shows that the few years of his residence in the convent at Erfurt were fruitful in results for the development of his thought. It is true that, during his course at the University, he had met most of those humanists who formed the Mutianic fraternity.[3] As he had himself made considerable progress in the Latin classical authors, he was sufficiently learned to appreciate the profound knowledge of the *literae humaniores* which so many of his contemporaries had acquired. But at no time, either then or afterwards, could he have been reckoned a humanist; his type of intellect was certainly not humanistic. Knowledge of every kind he valued, not indeed for its own sake, but because it was capable of serving the interests of religion and leading to a clearer comprehension of man's relation to God. Accordingly, whilst he was wrestling with the consciousness of sin, during those early days of his conventual life, the books which he studied had nothing to do with humanism; they were, in fact, only those that appeared useful for the solution of the spiritual problem which was ever present with him. His preceptor, John Nathin, of Neuenkircke, directed him to read the works of Occam and d'Ailly,[4] but Staupitz, the Vicar-General of the order, advised him to resume his biblical studies. At length, the soul of

[1] Luther, in later years, gave as his reason for entering the convent that "he doubted of himself."—Lindsay, I, 197.

[2] Köstlin, I, 58-9. [3] *Ibid.*, I, 48-50. [4] *Ibid.*, I, 66 *et seq.*

the young monk found peace in his reading of the Epistle to the Romans ;[1] his spiritual difficulties vanished, and he was able to return, with a quickened interest, to the study of theological works such as those of St. Bernard and speculative works such as those of Gerson.[2] Throughout his subsequent career Luther never wholly lost the impressions which he received from the books that he read at this period. The teachings of the great Parisian chancellor, accentuated as they were, in Luther's case, by a study of Tauler's works, were calculated to influence profoundly the mental outlook of a sincere and devout man; indeed, the person who imbibed them could never again view unconcernedly acts and things, however harmless or indifferent in themselves, which lay under suspicion of being founded upon false principles.[3]

On the nomination of Staupitz, Luther was invited, in 1508, to take up the work of teaching in the University of Wittemberg. At first he lectured on the Aristotelian philosophy, but afterwards on theology, a subject much more congenial to him. So busily occupied was he with his prelections and his studies of the Bible, St. Augustine, and, later on, Tauler's theology and sermons (which he ranked next in value to the Bible and the writings of the great Bishop of Hippo),[4] that the years passed swiftly for him in the small town of Electoral Saxony. But before he reached his "taulerschen studien," that is to say, during the latter part of 1511

[1] Lindsay, I, 203-4.

[2] Köstlin, I, 81 *et seq.*

[3] For Occam, consult Robertson, *Hist. of the Christian Ch.*, VII, 94-5, 102-4, etc. ; Milman (Dean H. H.), *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, London, 1872, IX, 146-8. For d'Ailly, see Creighton, *Hist. of the Papacy*, I, 317-8 ; Bonnechose (E. de), *Jean Hus, Gerson, et le Concile de Constance*, Paris, 1860, I, 222-4 ; Lenfant (Jaques), *Hist. du Concile de Constance*, Amsterdam, 1727, I, 69 *et seq.*, 589 *et seq.*, etc. The most distinctive of Lutheran doctrines, that of Consubstantiation, appears to be traceable to Occam's influence over the mind of Luther—see Robertson, *Hist. of the Chtn. Ch.*, VII, 494.

[4] Köstlin, I, 118.

and the beginning of 1512, he had accomplished a journey to Rome which afforded him many new experiences. For the first time the young German professor adequately realized the corruption and degradation into which the Church had fallen. The open irreligion, the shameless vice, the wicked blasphemies, at Rome were provoking some even of the Romans themselves to assert that " it was a hell, and could not hold out much longer."[1] One incident occurred there which proves that Luther was then already on the way towards the revision of his ideas regarding religious devotion. Many years afterwards, he related to his friends that, whilst he was praying as he laboriously climbed the Scala Lateranensis on his knees, the words of Habakkuk came into his mind, " The just shall live by his faith," and he at once rose to his feet and walked away. It was, in actual fact, a token of incipient revolt.

It is comparatively easy to discover to which side in the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy Luther's sympathies inclined ;[2] his strong patriotic sentiments furnish one basis of inference. Reuchlin's position as the chief German scholar would have been sufficient to commend his cause to Luther.[3] But the latter had, by this time, become theologically an opponent of that scholasticism which Reuchlin and the principal humanists resisted on literary and philosophical grounds.[4] The standpoint of the Augustinian friar of Wittemberg was an entirely different one from that of the humanists. Amongst these, no doubt, he possessed some friends : Crotus Rubeanus had been his fellow-student at the

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 105.

[2] There are numerous passages in his extant lectures which prove that he made extensive use of Reuchlin's works on Hebrew.—*D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Weimar 1883—, III, 30, 54, 148, etc.

[3] Luther liked Tauler's sermons all the better on account of their German dress—see his ep. to Spalatin, 14th Dec., 1516, in *Epistolarum Reuerendi Patris Domini D. Martini Lutheri*, tomus primus, IHENAE 1556, fol. 32 ; De Wette, I, 44-6. Cp. also Köstlin, I, 121.

[4] Köstlin, I, 138.

University of Erfurt, and with Mutianus he had been brought into friendly relations, presumably by Spalatin.[1] But Luther's objections to the scholasticism of the day had an intensely religious foundation. What was for the humanists a matter of intellectual freedom was for him a matter of the soul and conscience. We observe, therefore, that he felt the warmest sympathies with Reuchlin, and expressed, in a letter to Spalatin (August, 1514), a very contemptuous opinion of Ortwin.[2] Yet, both here and in an earlier letter to the same correspondent, he intimated his fears that the cause of true religion would meet with loss rather than gain from the dispute.[3] Indeed, Luther believed that the use of ridicule and contumely in a cause which had some connection with the inculcation of evangelical piety was a mistake, and one greatly to be regretted.[4] He recognized, not unjustly, that although satire might possibly further the designs which the humanists themselves had at heart, no advantage was likely to accrue to the Christian religion from it. Before, however, that final decision in the affair of Reuchlin, for which Luther so ardently prayed, should have been pronounced by the Pope, his own controversy was destined to have arisen and taken on a graver aspect than Reuchlin's had ever borne.

During the year 1516 the mind of Luther, especially as regarded his mental attitude towards popular conceptions of doctrine and practice, and his estimate of

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 140.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 139, and *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 6; De Wette, I, 13-4.

[3] Luther, alluding to the aims of Pfefferkorn and his friends, said (De Wette, I, 7; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 9vo.): "Jam vere de hoc quid dicam, quod Beelzebub ejicere moliuntur, et non in digito Dei? Hoc est, quod saepe plango et doleo." But, on the other hand, he disapproved of the tactics of their opponents—see De Wette, I, 13; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 6. Cp. a letter of his to Spalatin, Nov., 1517, De Wette, I, 75-6; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 43vo.

[4] See his epp. to John Lange, 5th Oct., 1516, *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 26, and De Wette, I, 37, and to Spalatin, Oct., 1516, De Wette, I, 38.

the value of externals in divine worship, was maturing rapidly under the combined influences of the Bible, the works of St. Augustine, and the writings of the mystics.[1] He then emerged into the light of day as an independent thinker on religious matters. Not that he all at once displayed that confidence in his own judgment which comes, in the case of every original thinker, only gradually, even sometimes with painful slowness. Of some of the old opinions which had been taught him he was still very tenacious, but he had now entered on the path which was to lead him into opposition to the authority of Rome. His dissatisfaction with scholastic theology grew with each day.[2] Even the teaching of Lefèvre, and more particularly that of Erasmus,[3] because both lacked the Augustinian doctrines of grace and personal righteousness and appeared to be restricted to the enunciation of rules of external devotion and piety, he not only deprecated but almost went so far as to condemn. So completely did he absorb the instructions of his favourite authors that he soon found his opinions at variance with those contained in contemporary theology. Accordingly, as early as May, 1517, he was involved in a theological argument concerning certain propositions drawn indirectly from St. Augustine, which Luther declared were regarded by some as unorthodox and by others as erroneous, but the fault, he maintained, really lay with the critics themselves because they did not read the Epistles of St. Paul intelligently.[4] In a

[1] See his *Quaestio de viribus et voluntate hominis sine gratia disputata*, 1516, and his *Vorrede* to the *deutschen Theologie* of December, 1516.—*Werke* (Weimar), I, 142-53.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 221-8 (*Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam*), and his ep. to Spalatin, 14th Jany., 1518, *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 45 *et seq.*

[3] At first, he explained that the difference between his ideas and those of Erasmus was to be accounted for by the Dutch scholar's preference of St. Jerome as an authority to St. Augustine, and his own preference of the African father to St. Jerome.—*Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 27, 34, and 47; De Wette, I, 39-40 and 52-3.

[4] Ep. to Christoph Scheurl, 6th May, 1517.—De Wette, I, 55.

letter dated 18th May, 1517, addressed to John Lange, Prior at Erfurt,[1] Luther announced :—

> Our theology and St. Augustine are advancing and prevailing in our University, with the help of God; Aristotle is gradually falling, and is tottering to a speedy and permanent overthrow.

By September of the same year he had made a further move forward—that is to say, he composed theses on some parts of current theology. As these theses met with hostile criticism he sought the advice and judgment of Eck upon them. Their nature cannot be ascertained from the expressions which Luther employs in reference to them in his letter of 11th September, 1517, to Christoph Scheurl.[2] The editor of his epistolary correspondence, De Wette, merely ventures upon a conjecture that "these propositions were directed against the scholastic theology," but his supposition is not convincing.

Only another month and his loyalty to Pauline theology as expounded by the great Bishop of Hippo conducted him into antagonism with papal practices.

Pope Julius II adopted, with his customary vigour and thoroughness, about the middle of 1505, the design which Nicholas V had first contemplated, of rebuilding St. Peter's at Rome. The ancient basilica, which had lasted for twelve centuries and had therefore formed a venerable connecting link between the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire and the commencement of modern times, was in a ruinous state. Instead of providing some scheme by which the old church would be restored, or at least preserved, Bramante, Julius's favourite architect, persuaded the pontiff to accept a plan for the erection of the new St. Peter's on the site of the old that involved the demolition of the latter. If lovers of antiquity, and especially those whose hearts are touched by honourable sentiments towards

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 57. [2] *Ibid.*, I, 63.

the memorials of the early Christian Church, deplore the loss of the time-worn basilica, they must nevertheless acknowledge that the offender (Bramante) atoned, in no small degree, for the imperfection of his advice with the magnificent grandeur of his architectural proposals.[1] But splendid architecture demands plentiful supplies of money to carry it into execution, and the resources of the papacy were being strained to the utmost by Julius's military enterprises. Extraordinary efforts, therefore, were required, from time to time, to raise the necessary funds for the continuance of the building operations. For that purpose, Julius wrote to several Christian princes soliciting their aid. Moreover, he appointed special collectors of charitable gifts towards this object, and set aside for it certain sums derivable from the sale of Indulgences.[2] During the subsequent pontificate, that of Leo X, similar methods were pursued.[3] About the year 1517, Pope Leo committed the collection of the proceeds of Indulgences in Germany to Albert, Archbishop of Mainz and Elector, who entrusted the business to Tetzel, a zealous Dominican.

It is well to remember that the theory of Indulgences was not clearly defined at this period; eminent theologians still held diverse opinions as to what constituted their scope. Besides, in the course of time, they had come to be applied to cases far different from those to which they had reference in former days. Originally, sincere repentance, confession, and the undertaking of a laborious task, such as a long pilgrimage or service as a crusader, were regarded as the proper grounds for obtaining an Indulgence. Papal practices had, however, made its acquisition easier, by substituting a payment of money to some charitable purpose designated by

[1] Pastor, VI, 460-81.

[2] *Ibid.*, VI, 482.

[3] The rumour of that date that Leo used the Indulgences as a means of raising money for his relatives was rejected by Roscoe, III, 150, but has been lately revived by Lindsay, I, 232.

the pontiff instead of the arduous work of satisfaction, and even by adding facilities for the performance of the other portion of the sacrament of penance.[1]

Tetzel proved himself an energetic collector of revenues. Apparently, he was anxious to execute his commission as well as he could. Unfortunately, he adopted methods for this object which even those most eager to defend him have been compelled to acknowledge were reprehensible.[2] Moreover, it was his misfortune that he did not give sufficient heed to the manifest tokens of impatience in Germany at the quantity of money which had been for many years going Romewards. Yet it is strange that he should have failed to observe them, for he received many warnings of what was certain to occur, sooner or later, on an extensive scale.[3]

Luther's advance in theology rendered him somewhat intolerant of whatever opposed the Augustinian views which he had accepted. Tetzel's plan of hawking the Indulgences about and lauding them, just as if they were ordinary merchandise, to increase their sale was repulsive to him ; the terms in which the commissioner described the Indulgences and their efficacy seemed to many besides Luther absolutely blasphemous. But, apart from these considerations, Luther was inclined to limit very severely the whole scope of Indulgences.[4] He had already studied the subject carefully and pondered much upon it, before the arrival of Tetzel at a part of Ducal Saxony which lay close to the neighbourhood

[1] Köstlin, bd. I, and Lindsay, vol. I, discourse at some length on the doctrine of Indulgences. Pastor also, VII, 329-49, deals with the same subject, but does not arrive, it is hardly necessary to say, at a conclusion similar to theirs. For an admirably clear, and brief, statement of the Indulgence-system, consult Creighton, VI, 69 *et seq.*

[2] Pastor, VII, 350.

[3] Some of the princes prohibited him from introducing his Papal Letters (*Indulgentiae papales, or literae Indulgentiarum*) into their dominions. Of these one was Frederick, Elector of Saxony, in whose principality Wittemberg was situated.

[4] Lindsay, I, 227.

of Wittemberg roused him to protest against the Dominican and his methods. He chose a remarkable moment for the formal publication of his dissent.

On All Saints' Day, 1517, Luther nailed his famous Theses to the door of the Castle church at Wittemberg.[1] All public disputations, in those days, were published by means of notices affixed to the door of the principal church in the district. The Castle church, moreover, was intimately connected with the University, so that a peculiar fitness marked the place that he chose for the publication of his Theses. But the occasion also was singularly apt. The Castle church had been constituted by the Elector Frederick the repository of a collection of relics which he had made, and, because it was dedicated to All Saints, special solemnities were customarily observed in it at that great November festival. Frederick, too, had obtained a grant of Indulgence for all those who should then visit the church and inspect the relics. Consequently, it was usual for multitudes of pilgrims and visitors, on that day, to throng Wittemberg and its principal church.[2]

The Theses were published in both the conventional Latin form and a German version.[3] Luther thus rendered his opinions on Indulgences accessible to the people. To Germany, restless and eager as she was to manifest her hostility to ecclesiastical encroachments, Luther's challenge was exceedingly welcome. The nation had become accustomed to see the Dominicans, and other representatives of ecclesiastical tyranny, always taking the offensive side in every contest; its delighted surprise was, therefore, all the greater at

[1] It ought to be remembered that Luther, by this publication of the Ninety-five Theses, did not commit himself irrevocably to the opinions contained in them (see *Werke*, Weimar, I, 233-8). They were merely propositions for discussion (see Pastor, VII, 351). As a matter of fact, Luther was by no means clear, at this time, as to what constituted the value of Indulgences—cp. his ep. to Spalatin, 15th Feb., 1518.

[2] *Epistola nuncupatoria* (page 9) prefixed to *Lutheri Epp.*

[3] For a brief summary of them, see Lindsay, I, 229.

finding a German who had not only the courage to attack the hated order of the Preachers but the ability to fix upon the most vulnerable part of ecclesiasticism as the point of his assault. So, at least, it seemed to Germany at the time. The Theses were read with avidity.[1] So boisterously enthusiastic were the students of Wittemberg that they imperilled Luther's safety.[2]

That Luther desired to be regarded at this juncture as an assailant of the Church or churchmen may be, with ample reason, dismissed from one's thoughts. For, on the same day that he put forth his Theses, he wrote to Archbishop Albert a letter in which he explained his action.[3] It is impossible to read that epistle without perceiving that Luther believed himself to be engaging in a task which merited the approbation of the heads of the Church, and would receive it.[4] He manifestly considered that his newly acquired Augustinian views were of authority in the Church, and that where these clashed with ecclesiastical practices, the latter should be deemed inadvertently erroneous.

Replies to Luther's Theses appeared in quick succession. Tetzel at once issued counter-theses. Sylvester Prierias, a Dominican official of the Vatican, to whose efforts the unsatisfactory termination of the Reuchlin case at Rome in 1516 was due, published, during the opening days of 1518, a work directed against the "presumptuous conclusions of Martin Luther."[5] John Eck also, an eminent theologian of Ingolstadt, with whom in the following year Luther had his famous Disputation, put forth a reply to the Ninety-five Theses under

[1] Luther's ep. to Scheurl, 5th March, 1518.—De Wette, I, 95-6.

[2] Ep. to Lange, 21st March, 1518.— *Ibid.*, I, 98; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 55vo.

[3] *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 38-40; De Wette, I, 67-70.

[4] Consult especially the passage of the ep. to the Archbishop which begins "Circumferuntur Indulgentiae papales" and ends with "et omnes poenae deleantur Purgatorii."

[5] Sleidan (Jean), *Histoire de l'estat de la Religion, et Republique sous l'Empereur Charles Cinquieme*, etc., imprimé à Strasbourg, 1558, 16B-18A.

the title of *Obelisks*. Luther's rejoinder to this last book was a pamphlet called *Asterisks*.[1]

His more temperate critics deserved a carefully reasoned vindication or defence of his position. This he, accordingly, gave them, about the middle of 1518, in his *Resolutiones*, a work which has been described as the " most carefully written of all Luther's writings."[2]

Luther's attitude of mind towards the Indulgences and the vulgar estimation of them can be ascertained, with a great deal of accuracy, from his correspondence during 1517-18. Early in the latter year, Staupitz, the Vicar-General of his order, whose ideals of piety had hitherto profoundly influenced Luther, produced a little book on *The Sweet Love of God*, from which it may be readily observed that the religious thought of his chief had been, to no small extent, the mainspring of Luther's bold action. Staupitz had emphasized the necessity of faith for obtaining the consolations and benefits of religion,[3] and as the controversy developed, the one fundamental truth to which Luther adhered firmly and consistently, viz., that faith was absolutely essential to the validity of all the exercises of religion, began gradually to exhibit itself more and more clearly as the real point at issue.

When Spalatin inquired, early in 1518, what he considered the true value of the Indulgences, Luther replied[4]:—

> This question is not settled, and my discussion of it meets only with contumely. However, I may say two

[1] *Lutheri Epp.*, epist. nuncupat., p. 9. For the *Asterisci Lutheri adversus Obeliscos Eckii* (1518) consult *Werke* (Weimar), I, 281-314, where each *Asteriscus* is a response to an *Obeliscus*.

[2] Lindsay, I, 230. For these *Resolutiones* see *Werke* (Weimar), I, 530-628.

[3] Cp. chap. IX of this little tract with chaps. VI and IX of another entitled " The Holy Christian Faith," which he wrote about this time—*Two ancient Spiritual Treatises of Dr. John of Staupitz*, English trans., London, 1692. Observe Luther's *Sermo de digna preparatione cordis pro suscipiendo Sacramento Eucharistie*, 1518, *Werke* (Weimar), I, 329-334.

[4] Ep. of 15th Feb., 1518.—De Wette, I, 92 ; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 51.

> things: Firstly—to thee alone and our friends, until such time as it may be published—I have begun to think that Indulgences contain nothing but deception of souls, and are, in no case, of benefit except to lazy and indolent followers of Christ. . . . Secondly—and herein is no doubt, for not only the whole Church, but even my foes are compelled to acknowledge it—almsgiving and helping one's neighbour is vastly better than Indulgences.

But he reserved the revelation of his inmost thoughts for Staupitz, as for one who, being his spiritual father, would understand and approve of them. He told him (31st March, 1518) that, though his name is in bad odour with many, and some slanderously assert he contemns pious exercises, the fact is that he has ever kept steadfast to Tauler's theology and to the doctrine set out in Staupitz's own works.[1] In the same letter, Luther advanced a strong plea for liberty to hold opinions different from those of the scholastic theologians.[2] But the epistle which he forwarded to the same correspondent on 30th May, 1518, was one of much greater importance, and indeed also length.[3] He enclosed in it the *Resolutiones*, together with a covering epistle to Leo X. This letter to Staupitz is of the nature of an Apologia, and contains a candid defence of his conduct which does much to prove that the motives by which he had been urged to publish the Ninety-five Theses were at least honest. Luther was aware that Staupitz, on account of his official position, required a satisfactory explanation of the events that had occurred in order that he might be able to transmit to the Pope the *Resolutiones* and the accompanying epistle.

To the pontiff, Luther related, from his own point of view, the origin and history of the controversy.[4] He

[1] De Wette, I, 102-3.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 115-8; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 66-69.

[4] It bears the same date as that to Staupitz.—De Wette, I, 119-122; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 69-71.

maintained that the traffickers in Indulgences had done much more than he to cast discredit on the papal see. When he heard of the malicious heretical lies which they were disseminating he had challenged them, in accordance with his right as a Doctor of Divinity, to a disputation upon the subject. He has now been called on to retract, but how could he, under the circumstances, retract? In Leo's hands he left the matter, and was prepared to accept his verdict as that of Christ speaking through him.

Probably Leo himself would have been glad enough to ignore the Lutheran dispute, or at least to take slow and gradual steps towards intervention,[1] but the officials of the Curia considered it advisable to urge the Pontiff to take prompt action against Luther. Accordingly, a papal citation to Rome (dated 7th August) was forwarded to the Augustinian friar of Wittemberg. He, for his part, refused to comply with the citation, and in this had the support (obtained for him by his friend Spalatin) of the Elector of Saxony and the Emperor Maximilian. Thereupon, the Pope committed the management of the affair to his Nuncio in Germany, Cardinal Cajetan (Thomas de Vio).[2] Unfortunately, the instructions issued to Cajetan, even though the original ones had been modified, were still not conciliatory enough, and, in consequence, the interview between the Nuncio and Luther at Augsburg (October, 1518) was unproductive of any hopeful result. For the Cardinal, in obedience to them, put forth a

[1] Sleidan, 16b and 44b. The estimate which Luther had formed of Leo's personal character remained all through the controversy very high, and even in his later denunciations of the Curia he averred that Leo was sitting there like a lamb in the midst of wolves—Sleidan, 46-7; Köstlin, I, 384 *et seq.*; Creighton, VI, 158; ep. to Leo, October, 1520—De Wette, I, 497, and *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 255-62. Cp. also *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 282vo. (11th September, 1520): "Scribam itaque id quod res est, nihil unquam in me fuisse, quod in personam pontificis raperetur: quid enim & facilius & verius scribere possum?"

[2] For the correspondence which led up to this procedure, see Sleidan, 20-2b; Roscoe, III, Appendices 150-3.

demand for an unconditional recantation, which met with an equally decisive refusal. One useful purpose alone the interview served: it made clear the grounds upon which the Curia was proceeding against Luther, and marked out for special condemnation his doctrine that, in order to obtain the benefit of the sacrament, it was requisite to have an absolute faith in its efficacy.[1]

Luther appealed from the Pope ill-informed to the Pope well-informed; shortly afterwards he appealed also to a future General Council, and then returned to Wittemberg, where he forthwith wrote out and published a report of the interview.[2]

By the fresh vigour he had infused into his work, students in ever increasing numbers had been attracted to Wittemberg and the prestige of the University greatly enhanced.[3] Outside the University the name of Luther was now widely known amongst his compatriots as that of one who had protested against German money being conveyed away to Rome, who had said that the Indulgences did not possess such efficacy as was claimed for them, and who had stood forth like a brave German to oppose Roman tyranny in Germany.[4] Luther's

[1] Luther to Carlstadt, 14th Oct., 1518: "Zum ersten, dass ich gesagt hab, dass der Ablass nicht sey der Schatz des Verdiensts unsers lieben Herrn und Seligmachers Christi. Zum andern, dass ein Mensch, das zu dem allerhochwirdigsten Sacrament gehen will, gläuben müsse."—De Wette, I, 159.

If Pastor, VII, 372, be right regarding Cajetan's "confidence in the theological superiority of his position, which made him hope to arrive by scientific methods at conclusions before which his adversary would be compelled to yield," it is marvellous how little of his scientific methods appeared in his interview with Luther.

[2] His *Acta Augustana* and his two (1518) Appeals are to be found in *Werke* (Weimar), II, 6-26, 28-33, 36-40.

[3] Luther's ep. to Martin Glaser, Augustinian Prior in Ransau, 30th May, 1519—De Wette, I, 279.

[4] Pope Leo's *Constitution on the Doctrine of Indulgences*, bearing date 9th November, 1518, effected no change in the thoughts of the German people, who probably regarded it as a law promulgated by the pope to justify the previous actions of himself and his emissaries—Pastor, VII, 379-80.

method, therefore, of taking his countrymen into his confidence, in a matter which appeared to affect them all, ensured him of their support. Everything which he published was eagerly read.

As his advisers deemed severity inexpedient, on account of the hostility of the German people and the threatening aspect of general politics, the pontiff despatched Karl von Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman and a friend of Spalatin, to institute inquiries into the affair in a conciliatory spirit.[1] The papal envoy was well chosen. Being himself a German he could gauge, to an extent of accuracy impossible to an Italian emissary, the temper of his compatriots. Miltitz, consequently, very nearly brought the dispute to a peaceful end by his address. He exacted a promise from Luther that he would write a submissive letter to Pope Leo and do everything in his power (short of a recantation) both to allay the wrath of the people and to revive a deferential attitude on their part towards the Holy See. As for Luther, he could hardly have expressed greater solicitude than he did, in his letter to the Elector Frederick (January, 1519) and in that to the Pope (3rd March, 1519),[2] for the cause of peace and the welfare of religion. Both letters contained an offer of considerable value ; Luther undertook to write a pamphlet exhorting all Christians to honour the Holy Church and its Head and to forgive his own injudicious and too little respectful bearing towards the authorities of the Church.[3]

[1] Sleidan, 31.

[2] De Wette, I, 207-8, and 233-5 ; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 153-4.

[3] Pastor, VII, 383, charges Luther with insincerity because he addressed the pontiff submissively in this epistle, whilst, about the same time, he expressed his doubtfulness as to whether the pope were Antichrist or only his emissary. It is true that, from time to time, the anger which his opponents fomented caused Luther to use disrespectful expressions of the papacy. Yet, it does not seem impossible to believe that, when he spoke submissively and professed respect, he was uttering the truth as it appeared to him in his calmer moments. Alternations in the

When the Curia learned of the compromise at which Miltitz had arrived, it declined to sanction it, and thereby once again (and this time finally) destroyed the hope of reconciliation. This is a circumstance that must be greatly deplored. For his part, Luther had kept the agreement made with the papal envoy. The responsibility, therefore, for the further continuance of the strife has to be laid upon the shoulders of the Vatican officials and the adversaries of Luther in Germany. If the Curia had been satisfied with the results of Miltitz's endeavours and had taken the precaution of silencing the combatants of both parties, western Christendom might still have retained its unity unimpaired. Christian charity and patience, combined with prudence were, at this juncture, essentials for the healing of the manifold disputes which had arisen; they, in all probability, would have had a beneficial effect upon the destinies of the Christian Faith. Unfortunately the age was one in which these gentle social virtues exerted little influence over the course of public affairs. The cause of religion has had, consequently, to suffer many reverses which might never have occurred, if the great commandment of the Lord had swayed the minds of His followers, or if the voices of the peacemakers had been allowed to prevail in the councils of the Christian Church.

During the summer of 1519 the contest began to assume a new character. Luther and Eck met in disputation at Leipzig. On numerous previous occasions Luther's opponents had asserted that the real point in debate was the supremacy of the Pope;[1] they had

judgment of a man, exposed to attack and harassed oftentimes by critics who are unfair or have their own objects and interests to serve, are not rare and do not necessarily imply moral depravity.

Whilst the negotiations were proceeding with Miltitz, Eck and especially Prierias were grieving the soul of Luther—see Luther's ep. to Scheurl, 20th Feb., 1519, De Wette, I, 230; and that to Staupitz of the same date, *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 152.

[1] See, for instance, Luther's *Ad dialogum Silvestri Prieratis de potestate*

endeavoured to make him comprehend that his protest against the traffic in Indulgences was, in effect, an attempt to detract from the authority of the Holy See. He had always repudiated that interpretation of his action : he was convinced that it could not be a true one. Now, for the first time in the course of the quarrel, the reiterated assertion of his foes took effect ; he began to observe clearly the real tendency of his op nions. But regarding the accuracy of them he maintained no misgivings, nor did his newly-awakened consciousness suggest to him any retraction of them. Pursuing the course of his own ratiocination, he arrived at a view of the doctrine of supremacy which was wholly novel to the Church of his time.[1] The disputation at Leipzig may be, therefore, regarded as a prelude to Luther's three remarkable treatises of 1520, "*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation respecting the Reformation of the Christian Estate*," "*Concerning Christian Liberty*," and "*On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church*." Before he wrote these treatises, Luther had become decided in his mind that the claims of thePapacy to the supremacy of the Church were based upon false grounds, and he accordingly rejected, with undisguised abhorrence, an authority which he had come to consider

papae responsio, 1518—*Werke* (Weimar), I, 647-86, and the *Replica F. Silvestri Prieratis ad F. Martinum Luther—ibid.*, II, 50-6. Pastor, VII, 393, says that Prierias, in his compendious treatise, *Errata et argumenta Martini Luteris recitata*, etc. (the Dedication of which to Pope Leo was dated 10th June, 1519, though the book itself was not printed until 27th March, 1520), declared that Luther, even when he protested against the Indulgence-vendors, was actually impugning the papal authority. And it may have been so, but Luther, at that early date, was not conscious of this significance of his action.

[1] Sleidan, 44b-45 ; Lindsay, I, 235-9 ; *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 191-5. Consult the *Resolutio Lutheriana super propositione XIII de potestate papae* and the *Disputatio I Eccii et M. Lutheri Lipsiae habita* 1519—*Werke* (Weimar), II, 183-240 and 254-383. See also the *Resolutiones Lutherianae super propositionibus suis Lipsiae disputatis* (*ibid.*, II, 391-435), which he addressed, soon after the Leipzig disputation, to George Spalatin ; in them Luther maintained the opinions he had advanced at Leipzig.

a usurpation. It is true that Laurentius Valla had shown the fictitious character of the so-called Donation of Constantine. The spuriousness of the Isidorian Decretals was even then widely acknowledged. Luther, however, went far beyond these results of historical criticism. In this eventful year (1520), he subjected the whole ecclesiastical system to a critical examination in the light of Scripture and history.[1] With the results of his deliberations as outlined in the three tracts of that year, Protestants of different nationalities and denominations, to a large extent, agree. It must be confessed that these books are not pleasant reading for anyone who cherishes sensitive ideas regarding the manner in which religious questions should be handled.[2] Yet, two facts concerning Luther himself must be taken into consideration when judgment is being passed upon the character of these treatises. The intensity of his religious convictions which had caused him to become an Augustinian produced in him, when he discerned

[1] See his ep. to the Emperor Charles V, 15th January, 1520.—*Luth. Epp.*, fol. 229-30; that to Nicolaus von Amsdorf (in German), 23rd June, 1520—De Wette, I, 457; and especially that to Hermann Tulich, Professor at Wittemberg, 6th October, 1520—*ibid.*, I, 493. The latter forms, in actual fact, an introduction to "The Babylonish Captivity."

[2] Of the least fiercely polemical of the three, the address "To the Christian Nobility," etc., John Lange had expressed his disapproval and termed it a trumpet-blast (*classicum tam atrox & ferox*). Luther, therefore, wrote to him, 18th August, 1520, "We here are persuaded that the Papacy is truly the seat of Antichrist. . . . Odi ex corde hominem illum peccati et filium perditionis cum universo suo imperio, quo aliud non nisi peccatum & hypocrisis alitur."—*Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 279vo. Melanchthon also wrote, 22nd November, 1520, to Lange on the same subject: "Consilium de scribenda ad Germanicam Nobilitatem epistola principio magis non improbavi, quam probavi. Animabatur enim noster ad eam rem praebendam à quibusdam, quibus utrique multum tribuimus. Deinde res per sese talis est, quam, quia divinitus agi puto, morari nolui. SpiritumMartini nolim temere in hac causa,ad quam destinatus ὑπὸ προνοίας *à providentia* videtur, interpellare. Porro libellus jam editus est & euulgatus, ut revocari è luce in tenebras nulla ratione possit."—*Epistolarum Liber. Phil. Melanchthonis*, Lugduni Batavorum, 1647, pp. 413-4.

An English translation of these treatises is to be found in Dean Wace and Dr. Buchheim, *Luther's Primary Works*, London, 1883.

the fictitious nature of the recent curialist pretensions, a deep and unfeigned abhorrence of the modern papal system. Moreover, he felt that he was fighting for his life; he had too many illustrations from previous generations of the fate which usually befell those who strove for reform not to recognize the destiny which might possibly be awaiting himself, unless he should attain security by a strenuous resistance. To him it seemed that the time for supplication or entreaty addressed to the Papacy was well-nigh past, and that of resistance, perhaps even revolt, had come. But he had yet some distance to travel before he could persuade himself to break openly with the Church of Rome. Rome herself made this easy, if not actually imperative, by her own action in launching the Bull of Excommunication, known as *Exsurge Domine*, against him. It reached Wittemberg about 11th October, 1520, and the epistle which Luther thereupon wrote to Pope Leo is, to some extent, a reply to it. It is not difficult to observe that Luther had, by this time, resolved upon the adoption of novel methods.[1] The Bull was not, however, the sole cause, though probably the immediate one, of provocation by which he was impelled to formulate revolutionary designs. According to his view of the matter, it was the culminating act in a series of unjust proceedings. The partiality of the papal counsellors, the manifest intention of the curial authorities to condemn him unheard, and their unwise step of commissioning Eck, his bitterest German foe, to conduct in Germany the publication of the papal sentence, drove Luther to translate into practice the scorn which he had learnt to entertain for the Roman administration of supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs.[2] The Universities declined

[1] *Lutheri Epp.*, ep. nuncup., p. 16: "Ignoravit vir Dei Papam Antichristum esse, hocque demum anno vigesimo perspexit: ideoque ad eius clientelam ac fidem aliquoties confugit, tanquam eius addictissimum mancipium."

[2] See Pastor, VII, 407 note.† Eck increased the difficulties of his task

to receive Eck; that of Wittemberg refused to publish the Bull. Some even of the bishops would not publish it in their dioceses. Luther questioned its authenticity.[1]

If its contents be regarded attentively, the Bull[2] will be seen to exhibit few tokens of administrative sagacity. By asserting too strongly the claims of the Holy See, it injured its case; by condemning Luther as a reformer, when, in fact, the difficulties of his position had transformed him into a rebel, it made its censure somewhat objectless.[3] As an instrument of correction, therefore, it was an utter failure.[4] Luther had determined to rely upon his countrymen for support, and subsequent events proved the wisdom of his choice.

Frederick of Saxony did not waver in his veneration for the Papacy as an institution, but he experienced some misgivings with respect to the justice meted out to Luther by the counsellors of the Vatican. A letter which he wrote, in the earlier part of 1520, to Pope Leo distinctly reveals this two-fold mental outlook.[5] He was not, he said, directly concerned in the uprightness or iniquity of Luther's position, in the truth or falsity of his doctrine; these were, indeed, matters which belonged to another tribunal than his. But, without attempting a decision on the merits of the case, he declared that Luther had been provoked, not so much by his own will or inclinations as by the attacks of Dr. Eck and certain writers in Rome, to treat of the Papacy; and, furthermore, that the request of Luther to be shown, by means of Scripture, wherein he had

by inserting in the Bull the names of some of his personal enemies for ecclesiastical censure.

[1] *Ibid.*, 408 *et seq.*; Lindsay, I, 249 *et seq.*

[2] The text is given in full by Roscoe, IV, App. 183, 12-22.

[3] Creighton, VI, 159.

[4] In the Papal Consistory, Cardinal Carvajal had described Luther's appeal to a General Council as the greatest offence of all.—Pastor, VII, 399. Uttered by him who had been the chief promoter of the *conciliabulum* of Pisa the remark is not without significance.

[5] Roscoe, IV, App. 185; Sleidan, 58.

erred, was likely to be recognized as a reasonable demand in Germany, where now there were many learned and thoughtful men.[1]

The Elector throughout the dispute maintained the attitude of a sincere Catholic, but he was also determined to be loyal to his country and his duties as a ruler.[2] Luther, in his estimation, was a professor in his University and possessed some claims upon him in consequence of being a German and a resident in the principality. Under these circumstances, he felt it incumbent upon him to afford Luther protection, but only so far as to guard him from unjust treatment until a properly constituted tribunal should have given him a fair trial.[3] If such a tribunal had been held, and had condemned Luther, he would, in all probability, have abandoned the friar to his fate. It may have been, though we confess that this is merely conjecture, that Frederick, like so many others of that era, viewed with

[1] Melanchthon wrote, 8th June, 1520, to John Hess of Wratislaw: "Invitat ultro Martinum Franciscus de Sickingen Equitum Germaniae rarum decus. Huttenus ad Ferdinandum Caroli fratrem proficiscitur, viam facturus libertati, per maximos Principes. Quid non speremus igitur?"—*Epp.*, p. 325. Cp. the opening sentences of Luther's ep. to Tulich, 6th October, 1520—De Wette, I, 493. The latter ep. can be read in an excellent English translation in *The Letters of Martin Luther*, by Margaret A. Currie, London, 1908, No. 47. This book has proved most useful to me, but would have been more so if the translation had included all Luther's available correspondence, and not merely selected letters.

[2] Consult the correspondence between the Elector and Cardinal Cajetan after the colloquy at Augsburg, 1518—Roscoe, III, Appdces. 157, 158; and the epp. addressed to Frederick by Luther and the Univ. of Wittemberg (29th Nov. and 23rd Nov., 1518)—De Wette, I, 174-87; Sleidan, 29.

[3] Sleidan, 65b-6b, gives an extract from the response of Frederick to the papal envoys, 4th Nov., 1520. The Elector declared that, if Luther were convicted by Scriptural proofs and solid argument, he would withdraw his protection from the friar; and he added, "Au reste il espere faire, Dieu aidant, l'office d'vn prince de l'Empire & d'vn obeissant fils de l'eglise." Aleander was very favourably impressed by Frederick on this occasion, and even after the Elector had refused, on 6th November, to deliver up Luther or to imprison him, he did not lose his confidence in the prince—see Pastor, VII, 421-3.

disapproval the ever-growing pretensions of the Papacy, obtruded as they were by astute curialists upon a protesting but helpless Christendom. However, nothing can be clearer than that this prince, at no juncture in the Lutheran controversy prior to 1521, extended to the recalcitrant Augustinian actual support or such recognition and approbation as would strengthen him in his resistance.[1] Frederick, therefore, cannot be said to have encouraged the opposition or revolt of Luther, but, when he saw that what he believed to be manifestly unjust proceedings were being instituted against the man, he resolved to protect him, and, later on, if he did not embrace Luther's theological opinions, he certainly became kindly disposed towards them.

Luther now felt convinced that a deed which would express his absolute persuasion that his cause was righteous would have an immense effect and make indisputably clear to the simplest mind the matters at issue in the controversy.[2] He had hitherto stood upon the defensive, but, with his natural sagacity, he perceived, that if he continued to retain this attitude indefinitely, he would engender in many quarters an impression of weakness. He had strong support among his countrymen, and he desired to make that fact plain to all the world.[3] Accordingly, on 10th December, 1520,

[1] Accusations of this kind were frequently uttered, during the first year of the dispute, and Luther feared greatly that they would have the effect of turning the mind of the Elector against him.—See Luther's ep. to Spalatin, 15th February, 1518, and that to Frederick, 29th November, 1518.—De Wette, I, 92, 186-7.

[2] Pastor, VII, 415; Sleidan, 67.

[3] Melanchthon to John Hess, Die Mercurii post primam Quadragesimam Dominicam, anno MDXXI—*Epp.*, pp. 328-31, and especially p. 328: "Adhuc autem & spirat & floret Martinus ipso etiam indignante & frendente Leone, quem hactenus falsò putabant omnia posse. Bullam Eccianam apud nos nemo probat, praeter eos, qui ventri suo potius quam Euangelio consultum volunt. Certè nobis ab ea nihil prorsus hactenus est periculi, etiamsi tonantibus & promulgantibus illam Episcopis. . . . Perissemus, si possent Papistae, quae eis ira suggerit: dolent diras Pontificias parum valuisse: Caesarianas sperant valituras."

he solemnly burned the papal Decretal Laws and the Bull of Excommunication outside the Elster Gate at Wittemberg, in the presence of a large concourse of citizens, professors, and students.[1] It was no less significant that, when Luther had executed his act of defiance and gone away, the students themselves, enthusiastic Lutherans all of them, had a burning of their own, in which they destroyed the books of Eck, Emser, and others, after which they sang a *Te Deum*. Young Germany was manifestly making rapid progress in anti-papalism.

The situation in which Luther found himself in 1520 resembled in many particulars that of Savonarola at the end of 1497 and the beginning of 1498; yet, undoubtedly, some of the circumstances of the one were very different from those of the other, and the causes of this dissimilarity must be sought for not so much in the characters of the men themselves, though these presented not a few remarkable contrasts, as in the qualities of the two peoples amongst whom they laboured. It is true that there were no analogies between the character of Luther, with its marvellous combination of prudence and audacity, of coolness and temerity, governed by commonsense and shrewdness, and that of the dreamy, impulsive Dominican of Florence, save their common attribute of resolute courage. Nevertheless, the reason why one failed in his projects, and the other, to a certain extent, succeeded, will be discovered by a consideration of the circumstances that surrounded each. Among the Germans Huss's life and teaching had not been without effect;

[1] Luther, in an ep. to Spalatin, written on the day of the burning of papal documents, says of it: "Ut videant incendarii Papistae non esse magnarum virium libros exurere, quos confutare non possunt. Haec erunt nova."—*Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 294. It is well to remember that the Bull which Luther burned (*Exsurge Domine*) contained only a conditional sentence of excommunication. Luther's final condemnation as an excommunicated heretic was announced by the Bull *Decet Romanum Pontificem*, 3rd January, 1521—see Pastor, VII, 415-6.

the dislike of papal provisions and exactions, and of clerical oppressions, had ceased to be individual or personal, and become national; the defects, mental and moral, of ecclesiastics had, for a considerable length of time, formed the theme of sarcastic diatribes; and the protracted suit of Reuchlin, recently concluded in favour of the friars, had aroused a widespread feeling of resentment against what was esteemed ecclesiastical tyranny. But other additional circumstances conspired to strengthen the Augustinian of Wittemberg: papal influences, from one cause or another, exerted small power within the borders of the several German principalities; and Luther, at this period, was prudent enough not to complicate the issue of his struggle by taking a share in the political affairs or parties of the time; yet he evinced an intense patriotism among a race which was capable of being moved as one compact body by patriotic sentiments. But the paramount circumstance in Luther's favour was the firm and reliable protection of the Elector of Saxony. It is possible that the surmise is correct that Luther, even in spite of his popularity, would have shared the fate of Savonarola, if he had not had Frederick's protection.[1] The peasant friar of Wittemberg, therefore, for whose revolt the way had been prepared long before, who possessed the support of faithful friends and the enthussiastic admiration of many of his own countrymen, and never lost the discreet guidance of his own talent of good-sense, stood in the midst of very different surroundings from those of the pathetically sad figure of Savonarola, betrayed by his lonely spiritual grandeur and even by the mistakes and defects of his own character.

The newly crowned Emperor, Charles V, held his first Diet at Worms in January, 1521. The Lutheran question was not the only important matter connected with ecclesiastical affairs in Germany which

[1] Lindsay, I, 258-9.

required the attention of the Diet. But Luther represented, in no inferior degree, the national sentiment of Germany, and, therefore, when he was summoned to appear before this assembly, it seemed as if Germany herself were about to plead through him for her rights. His journey to Worms partook of the nature of a triumphal progress.[1] Everywhere people flocked to see the German who was so intrepid as to protest against the papal oppression of the German race.

Before, however, he had set out upon his journey he observed signs of defection amongst some of those who had been his sincerest friends. Staupitz was the one whose weakness he most deplored. Certainly, it ought to have been enough to shake the courage of even a Luther to have discovered in such as Staupitz a readiness to bow before the storm which his quondam pupil was defying. Yet, far from depreciating the truly noble character of John Staupitz on account of the timidity he displayed at this juncture, we cannot refrain from indicating some of the reasons which, more powerful in Staupitz's estimation than they can be in ours, induced him to take a course different from Luther's and eventually to withhold his assistance from the Lutheran Reformation. Luther, in subsequent years, detected a fundamental distinction between Staupitz's views of righteousness and his own,[2] but the letter which he wrote to the Vicar-General on 9th February, 1521, afforded no token of a consciousness that they thought differently regarding evangelical truth; surprise, grief, disappointment, and anxiety appear to be the emotions that dictated his epistle.[3]

Imperceptibly perhaps to Luther himself his mental attitude towards long established ideals of church government had undergone a change. To very many of that time, though they were extremely desirous of

[1] Köstlin, I, 439-41.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 79.
[3] See *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 303-5, and De Wette, I, 556-8.

religious reform, the thought of its being accomplished in one portion of the Church and not in another was absolutely inconceivable.[1] Reform, in their minds, never signified a partial or local thing; it had to do with the Church as a whole, and therefore could not but be general. Such, at least, was the conception which Savonarola and all the Catholic Reformers, even Luther himself previous to 1520, formed of it. If they despaired of effecting it through the Papacy, they fell back upon the conciliar principle and nourished their longings with confidence in some future General Council. For the promotion of reform by one or other of these authorities they were content to wait. Meanwhile they persuaded themselves that their share of the great work consisted in teaching the Gospel and proclaiming the truth, as they understood it. It is worth noting that the part of Luther's address to the Diet of Worms which proved most incomprehensible to the members of that assembly was his equal condemnation of conciliar and papal infallibility.[2]

But, in truth, with Luther, even before he had set out for Worms, the conception of new ideals had taken place. No doubt, they were still in an inchoate state, but it is not hard to detect their existence or to trace their peculiar form in the letters and works he wrote during 1520-1521. Infallibility he had not ceased to acknowledge, but for him now it resided only in Holy Scripture. To the Catholic Church he still adhered faithfully, but he had now come to regard it as centring

[1] After the Leipzig Disputation, Reuchlin, probably suspecting the direction in which Luther's thoughts would lead him, sought to detach Melanchthon from the side of the Augustinian, but was unsuccessful—Köstlin, I, 285-7.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 452. In the censure on Luther pronounced by the Sorbonne, 15th April, 1521, his rejection of the decisions of General Councils is emphasized as peculiarly reprehensible—Bulaeus, VI, 117.

From the ep. which Luther wrote to the Elector on 25th January, 1521, it would appear as if he had not yet begun to entertain the thought of a reformation of the German nation apart from the rest of the Christian Church—see *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 301-3.

in Christ alone and its visible corporation as the aggregate of the national churches of which each was to a large extent independent of the other.

It may have been that Staupitz knew very little about the changes that Luther's ideals were undergoing. But, even if he discerned them, he did not concede to them his approbation. To him, indeed, it appeared as if the course of Luther ran in the direction, not of reform, but of revolt. He was unable and unwilling to advance as rapidly as the younger brother of his order, and he dreaded, not entirely for himself, but rather for the Christian Faith, the dangers of the way.

Two incidents calculated to have inspired Luther with fear occurred to him whilst he was on the road to Worms. One was his reception of the news that the Emperor had published an edict commanding all who possessed Luther's books to deliver them up. An ordinance of such a kind virtually condemned them. As he had been relying on the Emperor to grant him a fair trial, the news was not only disconcerting but terrifying.[1] Naturally, Luther felt somewhat dismayed, but he quickly recovered himself, for he assured Spalatin, in an epistle forwarded from Frankfort on 14th April[2]:

> I learn that the Emperor Charles's mandate has been published in order to fill me with fear. But Christ lives, and we will enter Worms in spite of all the gates of hell and the evil powers of the air.

The second came from Spalatin himself, who, desiring to fulfil the duty of a friend (but with ill-timed solicitude), sent a messenger to Luther to remind him of the fate of Huss.[3] But with dogged courage, the Augustinian resolved that he would enter Worms, no matter

[1] Köstlin, I, 441-2.

[2] *Lutheri Epp.*, fol. 315.

[3] Glapio, the Emperor's confessor, endeavoured, under the guise of friendship, to induce Luther to take refuge with Franz von Sickingen at Ebernburg. Köstlin, I, 443, says this was a ruse to exhaust the period of time within which the safe-conduct held good.

what might be the destiny that awaited him. When, at length, to the surprise of many, he arrived at Worms (16th April), the first words which he uttered as he stepped down from the travelling wagon, " God will be with me," revealed the secret of his courage.

On the following day, he had his first audience of the Emperor and Diet. He was nervous and awkward and spoke with a subdued voice. His bearing and personal appearance seemed altogether so inferior that Charles could hardly believe him to be the author of the notorious books in question.[1]

Johann von der Ecken (a learned person, but not to be identified with the professor of Ingolstadt), the official of the Archbishop of Trier, put two propositions to Luther : whether he would acknowledge that the books which were lying on the table before Ecken were his own compositions, and, if they were, whether he would retract the statements they contained. When their titles had been read out to him, Luther replied to the first proposition in the affirmative, but requested time for consideration before answering the second. He was granted until the next day.

On the following day, Thursday, 18th April, Luther stood before a crowded Reichstag. Hesitation and timidity had now vanished from his demeanour. Witnesses relate that, whilst he displayed modesty and reverence towards the august assembly in which he found himself, Luther spoke so distinctly and boldly in his own defence, and explained his position so clearly, as to extort profound admiration even from his opponents.[2] Whatever opinions may be held regarding Luther himself, no one can deny that his speech on this occasion reflects courage, prudence, sagacity, piety, and unwavering fidelity to what he believed to be the truth.[3] It was impossible for him, he declared, to retract un-

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 446.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 454 ; Lindsay, I, 292-3.
[3] Köstlin, I, 449-51, gives it in an abridged form.

conditionally the statements in his books without condemning some truths which all Christians received. Conformably with their contents, therefore, he divided his books into three classes. In one he placed those in which he taught only evangelical doctrine; these, obviously, he would not retract. In another, he put those that treated of the Papacy and papal dogmas; these he could not abjure, because he believed that the Papacy was exerting a baneful tyranny over the souls and bodies of Christians by means of its encroachments and decrees which set at nought the clear teaching of the Gospel and the statements of the Fathers. A recantation on his part of the opinions which he had published in accordance with the testimony of these authorities, especially if it were made at the instance of the Emperor and princes, would be conducive to an augmentation of the same tyranny and a further severance from true Christianity. The third class of his books, he said, were those in which he had maintained his views against personal enemies. He admitted that sometimes he had been too vehement, but he had never claimed to be a saint: he was only a man striving to vindicate the doctrine of Christ against what he was persuaded was ungodliness and wrong. He could not repudiate these books, because they contained the truth, so far as he knew it. Luther added that, if he were convicted of erroneous doctrines in his books, he would be the first to cast them into the fire; but he pleaded that only such arguments for or against them as were drawn from the prophetical or evangelical books of Holy Scripture should be considered valid. If he were accused of raising disturbances among Christians by means of his doctrines he would remind the assembly that this was at all times the normal consequence of teaching the word of God, according to the saying of Christ, "I am not come to send peace, but a sword," and this, in fact, was the direct road to a true and lasting peace. Luther declared that he hoped the reign of the young

and noble Emperor might have an auspicious beginning and a fortunate continuance, and that there was nothing which would contribute more to this happy result than the fear of God.

To most of the members of the Diet this reply was unacceptable. Ecken again addressed Luther and pointed out that his books contained some of the errors of Wycliffe, Huss, and other heretics, which the Popes and the Council of Constance had condemned. Once more he demanded, if Luther would recant these doctrines, for, as to the others, the Emperor was prepared to omit them from present consideration. It was then that Luther, in a brief reply, proclaimed his disbelief in the infallibility of both Pope and Council, whereby he enunciated a principle with which few, if any, of the princes could agree. He himself was perfectly cognizant of the novelty of the opinion he had uttered, for, as a man who has taken up a position which he is convinced will be generally regarded as untenable, Luther concluded his reply with the exclamation, "Ich kann nicht anders, hier stehe ich, Gott helf mir. Amen."

Some further interchange of arguments between Ecken and Luther followed, the former asserting and the latter denying the infallibility of General Councils. But Charles had no intention of permitting a theolological disputation to develop in the Reichstag, and therefore cut the debate short.

To Luther his dismissal came as a welcome relief, and the cry that he uttered as he entered his lodging, "Ich bin hindurch, ich bin hindurch," signified the relaxation of the strain to which he had been subjected during these two days. At last, his situation was exactly defined. He now realized that there was nothing more to hope for from the Emperor; the Pope had already failed him. Save for the personal friends that he had around him, he stood alone, a notorious heretic, already banned by the Head of the Church and soon to be put

also to the ban of the Empire. For the time being, he experienced an actually comforting peacefulness in the clear comprehension of his position.[1]

On the morrow, 19th April, the Emperor Charles delivered judgment upon the Lutheran affair, and, at the same time, affirmed, with an explicitness such as he never again manifested publicly, his unalterable attachment to the traditions of his ancestors. This remarkable pronouncement, so momentous for the subsequent religious history of western Europe, appears to have emanated from the Emperor himself. It expressed his most intimate convictions; it was, in fact, his confession of faith.[2] The German princes present at the Diet felt that its tone was more arrogant than was altogether agreeable to themselves, but it is impossible to avoid perceiving that no small part of what seemed to them haughty dogmatism was simply the candid piety and sincerity of a man who, once in his lifetime, laid aside his natural reticence to bare his soul before the world. Rarely, indeed, has history furnished an episode so capable of rousing the imagination as the Lutheran incident at Worms. An accused peasant friar comes face to face, for the first and only time, with a royal judge; and the two, the judge and the defendant, give utterance to adverse declarations of belief which foreshadow the struggles of subsequent ages. Their minds move in different planes of thought, but neither fears to speak with candour and integrity, when his innate rectitude impels him, even though conscious of disapprobation among the listening bystanders. For Luther's "Ich kann nicht anders, hier stehe ich, Gott helf mir," finds its noblest counterpart in Charles's "I have resolved to stake upon this cause all my dominions, my friends, my body and blood, my life and soul."

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[1] Köstlin, I, 452-4.
[2] Armstrong, *Charles V*, I, 70-1; Lindsay, I, 264.

With the delivery of these two antagonistic opinions ended Luther's career as a Catholic reformer. He and those who espoused his cause had still before them a great work to accomplish, in which they were destined to attain a large measure of success. But it was no longer possible that it could be a Catholic reformation. The issue of the Bull of Excommunication and Luther's bold act in burning it publicly, his speech before the Diet, and Charles's declaration, combined to give the movement for the betterment of religion a new direction in Germany and to originate, during subsequent years, the formation of new theories of church government in that country. It must be noted, however, no rupture in the German Church had as yet taken place when the Pope prevented the meeting of the German States to deliberate on the condition of the Church in their dominions, as the Diet of Spires (1524) had proposed, and endeavoured, through his nuncio, to establish a league of German princes favourable to his own interests. Here is to be found the earliest cause of divisions within the Church in Germany.[1] The Peasants' War of the following year furnished other serious obstacles to the scheme of a national reformation, and destroyed finally and completely the hopes, which Luther had carried with him to Worms, of a united Germany awakening to the glorious work of restoring evangelical truth and Christian piety within her borders.[2]

[1] Lindsay, I, 324.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 335; cp. Strauss, *Ulrich von Hutten*, Eng. trans., ch. VII, and Chauffour-Kestner, *Ulrich von Hutten, Imperial Poet and Orator*, Eng. trans, by Archibald Young, Edinburgh, 1863, pp. 99-110.

CHAPTER IX

OBSCURANTISTS AND CURIALISTS IN OPPOSITION TO THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS CATHOLIC REFORM

THE most immediate effect of Erasmus's edition of the New Testament was the impetus it gave to biblical studies.[1] At several Universities the New Testament constituted the theme of public lectures which found enthusiastic audiences.[2] As early as September, 1516, Wolfgang Köpfel, better known by his literary title Fabricius Capito, began to lecture on the Epistle to the Romans, as corrected and annotated by Erasmus, and from that time forward continued to deliver sermons and prelections upon various portions of the New Testament. But Capito, when he informed the great scholar of this new direction of his activities (ep. of 2nd September, 1516, from Basle), at the same time begged him to refrain, for the future, from too candid an expression of opinion upon superstitions, penances, prescriptions of a fixed number of prayers to be recited, " and the commonly observed things which have been brought into public usage in our age by credulity or simple faith."[3]

[1] See the epp. of John Watson, Cambridge, August, and of Glareanus, Basle, September, 1516—*Eras. Op.*, III, 161D, 197D; Allen, II, 315, and Nichols, II, 386. The Elector Frederick and Duke George of Saxony, as well as the Bishop of Paris, appreciated all Erasmus's works—*Eras. Op.*, III, 272D, 444A, 1592C, 170B. Cp. also *ibid.*, 1598B-D, 235B-E, 1813A, etc.

[2] Bullock was lecturing on the Gospels at Cambridge in the spring of 1517—*Ibid.*, 1558B.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1567B-D.

From this letter it will be seen that, though conscious of many things amiss in the lives and religious ideas of contemporary Christians, those who then were aiming at imparting the knowledge of Christ to their own generation preferred to leave what they regarded as errors to be eradicated by the growth of the truth ; a mode of procedure which was characteristic of the Catholic reformers. Even Erasmus adopted it as a rule of his conduct, but he did not always permit it to hamper his freedom of writing.[1] In this respect he proved himself a true humanist.

On 26th February, 1517, Erasmus sent as his reply to Capito an epistle which deserves special notice.[2] Acuteness in discerning the general tendency of contemporary thought was, at all times, a distinctive quality of the great scholar, and, it is true, he exhibits it here in a marked degree. The particular, however, which imparts more than ordinary interest to this letter is the note of joyous exultation with which Erasmus heralds the approach of an era when the desires that he and his friends were harbouring should be attained. But when the actual events of 1517 and the immediately succeeding years are taken into consideration the jubilant announcement seems to us not a little premature.

The accusations Erasmus made against the scholastic theologians of his day are corroborated both by the terms he employed in an epistle to the Bishop of Paris, dated 14th February, 1517,[3] and by the later experiences of the person he therein recommended (Henry Loriti of Glarus) to the Bishop for an academic position in the great French University.[4]

It is not a little curious that the first serious opponent

[1] Observe the remark of Beatus Rhenanus to Erasmus, ep. of 10th May, 1517—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1606E, and Erasmus's reply to Caesarius, ep. of 16th August, 1517—*ibid.*, 1622D-F.

[2] *Ibid.*, 186F-189D.

[3] *Ibid.*, 232D-F.

[4] Ep. of Glareanus to Erasmus, 5th Augt., 1517—*ibid.*, 1621E.

whom the Dutch scholar encountered should have happened to have been a man for whom he never failed to express a profound regard—a man, moreover, who deserved it. Whilst the dispute lasted, it was a warm one, and, at times, even threatened to become bitter. It arose out of a comment of Erasmus's on a note which Lefèvre had appended to a passage in his *Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Heb. ii. 7). The French scholar had emphasized, perhaps too strongly, the reading of the original Hebrew of the quotation from Psalm viii.[1] Erasmus, on the other hand, preferred to follow the Greek and to translate it " for a little time lower than the angels."[2]

Friends and admirers of both disputants took care that no ill-will should arise between them.[3] But, indeed, Erasmus and Lefèvre entertained friendly sentiments towards one another. Even in the heat of controversy they expressed their mutual esteem.[4] There is, however, reason to think that the Frenchman felt hurt at a criticism which Erasmus had not intended to be offensive, and that this circumstance furnished some cause for anxiety to their friends. We find abundant proofs that they continued to have a high opinion of each other in subsequent years, and it is therefore quite unnecessary here to examine minutely into the particulars of their disagreement.[5]

[1] See Drummond's excellent remark, I, 324.

[2] See *Eras. Op.*, IX, 17-66 (*Apologia ad Jac. Fabrum*, dated 5th Augt., 1517), to which is subjoined the *Disputatio* of Lefèvre that Erasmus was endeavouring to refute (*ibid.*, 67-79). In Psalm viii. 5, our Revised Version has a remarkably different translation from that of our Prayer-book and Authorized Versions, one, moreover, which accords better with Lefèvre's judgment than Erasmus's. Consult the curious note that Dr. Franz Delitsch gives on this passage—*Biblical Commentary on the Paslms*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1871, vol. I, p. 154.

[3] Cp. *Eras. Op.*, III, 1616C, 1617A, 1622B, 1634B.

[4] See Lefèvre's ep. to Erasmus, 23rd Oct., 1514—*ibid.*, 1812C-D; and the kindly greeting of Lefèvre conveyed to Erasmus by Budé, Nov., 1516—*ibid.*, 211B. Cp. also *Eras. Op.*, IX, 80.

[5] Erasmus could speak of no man more highly than he does of Lefèvre

A few years later Erasmus became involved in a most perilous and vexatious quarrel with Edward Lee, with whom in 1517 he was on terms of amity.[1] But, before this momentous dispute had reached importance, Erasmus had lost his best friend and the movement towards Catholic Reform one of its earliest promoters, Colet.

In the last mentioned letter which the Dean sent to Erasmus, that of 20th October, 1514, he had told his friend what a harassed life he was leading, and that he longed to withdraw into retirement among the Carthusians. Truly the time had now arrived when tranquillity was, for him, impossible of attainment as long as he continued to be Dean of St. Paul's; even his exercise of decanal privileges and duties was being straitened. It is not difficult to realize his position. The path of a reformer, however honourable and frank, however actuated by high principles he be, is a hard one. Colet was surrounded by foes. His doctrines, as novel to his ecclesiastical subordinates, equals, and superiors, as they were substantially true in accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture, and the dictates of a well informed, devout mind, raised a hostile spirit against him. But when to these were added his open abhorrence of the evil lives of the clergy, their corrupt practices,[2] their culpable negligence of duties, and their

throughout his *Annotationes* (see, in the edition of 1527, p. 325 beg., etc.), even at a time when it was somewhat dangerous to do so. Lefèvre, no doubt, did not in later years refer to Erasmus in his biblical works; but no stress can be laid upon this circumstance, because it never was his practice to allude to modern writers, and, besides, his books were of a kind that precluded such references. The Frenchman, after the dispute, avoided textual criticism as much as possible.

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1656B-C.

[2] He displayed his undisguised contempt for the relic-mongering so prevalent in that age, during a pilgrimage which he made, in the company of Erasmus, to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, probably in 1513—see *Erasmi Colloquiorum . . . Opus Aureum*, Londini, 1676, pp. 267-75. For an excellent English translation of the *Colloquies*, consult N. Bailey's version, edited with notes by the Rev. E.

lack of suitable qualities for the Christian ministry, and his attempts to institute reforms, the hatred which he had aroused became unappeasable. Under these circumstances, that Colet should look forward to the peace of retirement from the deanery is not surprising. Yet he retained the office, possibly because, though his inclination pointed out the easier course, his conscientious scruples forbade him to desert, on account of its difficulty, a position which presented him with numerous opportunities of doing good.[1]

Colet's own letter to Erasmus, 20th June, 1516, reveals, even more plainly than anything his friends could say of him, the nature of the man himself and the character of his ideals and aspirations[2]:—

> I comprehend what thou writest concerning the New Testament. The copies of thy new edition are bought here eagerly, and read everywhere. Many approve of thy studies, and are astonished at them; but some disapprove and censure them, and say those things which are in the letter that Martin Dorpius wrote to thee. The latter, however, belong to the class of theologians whom thou hast described in thy *Moria*, and other places, not less truly than amusingly. To be praised by these is blame, to be blamed the highest praise. . . .
>
> Thou hast done well in writing the *De Institutione Principis Christiani*. Would that Christian princes followed thy instructions! Their follies turn everything upside down. I am anxious to have that little

Johnson, M.A., in three volumes, London, 1900. The portion referred to here is in vol. II, pp. 234-244.

[1] Erasmus (*Op.*, III, 136E; Allen, II, 246) writing to Ammonius, 5th June, 1516, alludes to the Christ-like spirit of Colet in requiting good for evil to one who had been formerly his friend but took the side of his foes. Allen, in an article in the *English Historical Review*, XVII (1902), pp. 305-6, maintains that this person was Achbp. Warham and that the unkindness he had shown to the Dean was his confirmation, on grounds of prudence, of a sentence of temporary suspension from preaching which Bp. FitzJames had pronounced in 1513 against Colet.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1572-3.

book, because I know well that, like everything thou doest, it will go forth from thee perfect. . . .

Our friend Canterbury, when I was with him a few days ago, spoke much of thee, and yearned for thy presence. He, now freed from all business affairs, dwells in a happy state of leisure. . . .

They who love the Scriptures will receive valuable help in reading them, if thou wilt explain the meaning; and by so doing thou wilt bestow immortality upon thy name. Immortality, do I say? The name of Erasmus truly shall never be forgotten, but thou wilt confer eternal glory on it, and, as thy work is for Jesus, thou wilt prepare for thyself everlasting life. . . .

If thou wilt permit me, I will attach myself to thy side, and show myself thy pupil even by learning Greek, for, though I am so advanced in years as to be almost an old man, I remember that Cato, when an old man, learned Greek literature, and I remark that even thou, who art applying thyself to learning Hebrew, art of the same age as myself.

Love me, as thou dost. If thou returnest to us, thou wilt find me most devoted to thee. Farewell.

Written from the country of Stepney, in the house of my mother, who still lives and grows old beautifully, and makes pleasant and kindly mention of thee.

On the day of St. Edward, the Feast of his Translation.[1]

So much was Colet affected by the extraordinary progress which Erasmus had made in the comprehension of Holy Scripture that he began seriously to study Greek in the hope of attaining a like success. Accordingly, Thomas More wrote to Erasmus on 22nd September[2]:—

Colet is now working hard at Greek (*graecatur strenue*), employing for that purpose the uncertain

[1] The Leyden editor has assumed that this date signified 13th October. Seebohm (*Oxford Ref.*, p. 397) has shown, however, that 20th June was that intended. Nichols (II, 288) and Allen agree with this conclusion.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1553c. For the date, see Nichols, II, 393, and Allen, II, 347.

> labours of my Clement. I believe he will continue and succeed, especially if thou givest him, from Louvain, some spurring on—though, perhaps, it might be better to leave him to the suggestion of his own will. As thou knowest, he is now wont to resist, for the sake of argument, those who are trying to persuade him to do what he himself most desires.

It is evident that the long, unceasing struggle, in which Colet had been, for so many years, engaged, was producing its natural effect; his disposition, at one time cheerful and equable, was weakening into a state of irritability and obstinacy. That quality which had made him the restorer, in the sixteenth century, of a general study of the Bible, and, to a marked extent, the founder of modern biblical exposition, viz., his reluctance to accept anything merely on authority, had now degenerated into an indiscriminative combativeness. The end was not far off. From this time on, his letters, and the references to him made by others in their correspondence, reveal distinctly that Colet now began to decline gradually in bodily health. He grew less able to endure what, previously, he would have passed without notice, and occasionally even exhibited peevishness towards his friends. For instance, about the end of May, 1517, Erasmus sent a copy of Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabbalistica* to Bishop Fisher as a present, but omitted to send one to Colet, who thereupon wrote to his Dutch friend declaring his displeasure at Erasmus's practice of saluting him in other men's letters, instead of writing direct to him. Colet admitted that the present to the Bishop had come into his hands, and that he had detained and read it. He then concluded with the expression of a wish that showed the real nature of the man[1]:—

> O Erasmus, of books and knowledge there is no end, and nothing is better for this short life than to

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1660D-F. Cp. Fisher's ep. to Erasmus—*ibid.*, 1812F. Allen, II, 598, and Nichols, II, 569 and 596, give date of both epp. as June or July, 1517. Consult also *Eras. Op.*, III, 1630C and 1641E.

> live holily and purely, and daily to attend to the purification, illumination, and perfection of ourselves. These things Reuchlin's *Pythagorica* and *Cabbalistica* claim to give; but, in my opinion, we will attain them only by the fervent love and imitation of Jesus. Leaving all roundabout ways, let us seek truth by the shortest road. That is my earnest desire.

The above epistle derives no small part of its interest from the fact that it is the last one of Colet's which is now extant.[1]

At this particular time no name stood higher than that of John Colet; no character commanded profounder reverence. He was not a traveller. So far as we know, he carried on no extensive correspondence with the scholars of his day, either English or foreign; nor did he publish any works of value to humanists, legists, literati, or even theologians. He was not a politician or diplomatist; he never sought to exert influence over the powerful and great in public affairs, albeit King Henry extended to him privileges seldom granted by royalty. If these things be carefully considered it will be seen that the fame which he acquired came to him partly from his reputation for holiness and partly from the importance of his works to the cause of religion.[2]

Colet was as incapable of subterfuge as of compliance with what was expedient rather than what he believed to be right; he could not imitate Erasmus's outward

[1] If we except the commendatory letter, addressed to Wolsey on 18th December, 1517, which he gave to John Rightwise, surmaster of his school—Lupton, *Colet*, p. 226.

[2] François Deloin, towards the end of 1516, declared his affection for his former fellow-student at Orleans, Colet, "a man remarkable alike for his learning and the purity of his life"—ep. to Erasmus, *Eras. Op.*, III, 182B; see the ep. of Œcolampadius, 26th March, 1517, which contains an allusion to Colet of similar import—*ibid.*, 235C.

Notable scholars such as Henry Cornelius Agrippa came to him for instruction in theology: "Anno autem sequenti in Britanniam trajiciens, apud Johan. Coletum Catholicae doctrinae eruditissimum, integerrimaeque vitae virum, in divi Pauli epist. desudavi."—Agrippa's words quoted by Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 199-200.

acquiescence in the false accretions to the popular creed. The uncompromising rectitude of his nature was a principal cause of both his sorrows and his glory.

Besides King Henry, the powerful Cardinal Wolsey accorded to him his respect. Colet had been the appointed preacher on the occasion of that prelate's advancement to the rank of Cardinal, and had addressed to him some candid and faithful words of admonition.[1] Wolsey's kindly disposition, in subsequent years, towards Colet shows that the advice was not taken in ill part.[2] No higher tribute, indeed, to the wisdom of the latter's ideals of ecclesiastical reform could have been offered than that which the Cardinal paid, after Colet's decease, when, endeavouring to effect improvements in morality and discipline among the clergy, he proceeded to conduct the enterprise upon the lines laid down by the Dean. In this, even though he employed the full authority of a Papal Legate, Wolsey failed to attain any marked success, a fact which illustrates the supreme difficulty of Colet's position as a reformer, and, at the same time, enables us to comprehend the despair which Bishop Fox expressed, in a letter to Wolsey, of being able to produce any alteration in the existing conditions of the life and circumstances of the clergy.[3]

Thrice between the date of Colet's last mentioned letter and that of his death, Erasmus wrote to him. It is manifest that the Dean had written several times during that period to the renowned scholar, but this portion of his correspondence is not now extant. However, the loss is somewhat repaired by our possessing the letters of Erasmus.

In consequence of the numerous criticisms, friendly and hostile, which his first edition of the New Testament had called forth, and the corrections that even he himself perceived to be necessary, Erasmus began, about

[1] Seebohm, p. 345.
[2] Lupton, *Colet*, p. 227; *Eras. Op.*, III, 1628F.
[3] Taunton, *Wolsey*, pp. 62-6 and 83.

the spring of 1518, to make arrangements for the production of a second edition. This involved another journey to Basle, and an expenditure of money for which he was ill equipped. Accordingly, he sent, on 5th March, a bundle of letters to his friends in England, amongst which was one for Colet[1]:—

> Best of instructors, I am astonished and grieved that the One-eyed has come hither without a letter from thee. . . .
>
> I am obliged to go to Basle, or, as I imagine it will rather be, to Venice for the printing of the New Testament and some other matters. . . .
>
> Art thou (thou wilt say), an old man and an invalid, undertaking so great a journey, especially at such a time as the present than which there has not been a more villainous for six hundred years, in consequence of the unbridled licence of robbers everywhere? But what else can one do (*sed quid facias?*)? I was born to this luck. If I die, at any rate I shall die for a cause that is far from an evil one, unless I am mistaken; and if, on the other hand, I shall happen to come back, with this last act of the tale concluded to my satisfaction, I have determined to pass the remainder of my life among you: and that shall mean my retirement from a world depraved in every quarter. In every prince's court pretended theologians bear rule; the Roman Curia has clearly lost all sense of shame, for what can be more disgraceful than these perpetual condonations? Now a war against the Turks is being put forward as a pretext, whereas the Spanish are to be driven out of Naples, because Lorenzo, the nephew (*i.e.*, of Pope Leo) is trying to establish a claim to Campagna for himself, now that he has married the daughter of the King of Navarre.[2] And if these disturbances advance any further the rule of the Turks will be preferable to that of these

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1690. Like the succeeding ep. to Fisher (*ibid.*, 1691-2), this bears only the year-date, but a comparison with *ibid.*, 1670E, 1671C, 1672C-D, and especially 1673C-E, supplies the day and the month.

[2] As a matter of fact, Lorenzo did not marry Madeleine de la Tour until April—Creighton, V, 288.

> Christians. But away with bootless complainings! . . .

Apparently, Colet managed the business of obtaining monetary assistance from King Henry to the contentment of Erasmus, who, a short time before his departure to Basle, replied as follows[1]:—

> Best of patrons, I have already expressed, through Francis, my thanks to thee for thy kindness, and have handed on the note in which I show my satisfaction with regard to the money that the King has sent. . . .
>
> The moment the work has been finished, I shall, with all my heart, come to thee, particularly if some piece of good fortune should turn up. For that I beg that thou wilt continue thy exertions. Farewell indeed. Louvain, 1 May, 1518.

Some months passed, during which Erasmus executed the important task of editing for the second time the New Testament at Basle. Whether, within that period, he wrote to Colet, or Colet to him, is doubtful. We have certain knowledge of one other letter (and this is the final extant communication between these two remarkable men) which he despatched to the Dean on 23rd October, a few days after his return to Louvain. This letter exists in a fragmentary condition through the loss of a page of the letter-book, in which the autograph was contained.[2] Imperfect as it is, it is of considerable value to us, inasmuch as its conclusion affords us some insight into the opinion of a keen spectator of the course of events in the ecclesiastical world. We cannot avoid the inference from it that Colet, as well as Erasmus himself, was watching, with deep interest and perhaps some sympathy, the rapid development of the religious contest in Germany.

> The New Testament will shortly be issued, somewhat satisfactorily. My arguments on all the

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 238E-F, where it is dated 1517, but the contents fix the year as 1518 beyond question.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1685-6. Observe Leclerc's footnote.

Apostolic Epistles are being edited. I will soon proceed to the Paraphrases of the others. Give me thy advice with respect to what displeased thee in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

I am sending thee a copy of the speech made by the Dominican Friar, Cardinal Cajetan, in the Council of the Princes at Augsburg, where the Emperor is performing a fine comedy, and is urging the Archbishop of Mainz (for he is young) to lower his dignity by accepting the Hat, and thus becoming a monk of the Vatican order. O my Colet, what shifting scene of human affairs is now being put on the stage? Men are being turned into Gods, and the priesthood into a despotism; princes are combining with the Pontiff, ay, and with the Sultan, against the people's good; Christ is growing obsolete, and being, like Moses, forgotten.[1] Farewell. Louvain, 23 October, 1518.

Colet's decline in health became most marked about the middle of 1518, and, from a few scattered notices, we gather that he ceased now to deliver those evangelical addresses in St. Paul's which had been so much appreciated by the seekers after spiritual admonition.[2] At length, there came upon him in 1519 the third attack of the sweating sickness, at that time the bane of England, and this left behind it, when it had passed away, a wasting disorder. Early in September, all hope of his recovery had vanished. On 16th September, 1519, he expired, having lain at the point of death for nearly a week.[3]

To say that he was mourned by his generation is not, in his case, vain hyperbole. His epitaph, without any exaggeration, described him thus: "John Colet, son of Henry Colet twice Mayor of London, Dean of this Cathedral, died in the year 1519, to the great sorrow of all the people who, because of the uprightness of his

[1] "Christus antiquatur & Mosen sequitur"—*ibid.*, 1686B.

[2] Cp. Erasmus's remark to Bombasius, 26th July, 1518—*Eras. Op.*, III, 402D, and Lupton, *Colet*, pp. 227-9.

[3] Seebohm, p. 503.

life and his divine gift of preaching, loved him above all in his time," etc.[1] As for Erasmus, when the sad news reached him, he burst into a storm of grief which found utterance in a succession of epistles to his friends, English and continental: to Budé, Lupset, Pace, Dancaster, Tunstall, and Bishop Fisher.[2] His letter to the last named contains a remark about Colet that not only exhibits the firm faith the two friends had in Christ, but also throws not a little light upon the important fact that neither bequeathed anything for obits, requiem-masses, or trentals, though this would have been in accordance with the religious ideas in which they had been brought up:[3] they rested their hopes of celestial happiness on Christ alone and the all-sufficiency of His mercy[4]:—

> So far I have written, though my heart is filled with grief for Colet. . . . I know it is well with him, who, taken away from this iniquitous and troublesome generation, enjoys close at hand that Christ Whom, during life, he loved so well. . . .

When, in a later epistle to Lupset, he had occasion to mention Colet, he exclaims concerning him[5]:—

> O real theologian! O marvellous preacher of evangelical doctrine! With what energy he drank in the philosophy of Christ! How eagerly he sought after the mind and spirit of St. Paul! And how the purity of his whole life corresponded with the divine teaching! How many years did he instruct the people freely, in this respect imitating his Paul!

But Erasmus's most touching tribute to the memory of his friend is to be found in the conclusion of the long epistle addressed to Justus Jonas which until recently constituted the chief, indeed almost the sole, basis for

[1] *Ibid.*, 505.
[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 506, 508, 509, 510, 512.
[3] Lupton, *Colet*, p. 232.
[4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 512A.
[5] *Ibid.*, 532E.

a biography of Colet. There, alluding to the holy Franciscan, Jean Vitrier, and Colet, he said[1]:—

> But if thou wilt hearken to me, Jonas, thou wilt have no hesitation in saying that these two men ought to be included in the Catalogue of Saints, though no Pope enrolled them in the Canon. Happy souls, to whom I owe much, with your prayers aid Erasmus, still struggling amidst the ills of this life, to return to your fellowship never more to quit it!

One pioneer was gone, and upon Erasmus there fell all the heavier the burden of maintaining the ideals of Catholic reform. As, in his case, these were not a little impeded by his humanistic temperament and his alternations of candour and evasion, they ceased to be insisted upon with that constancy which their nature demanded. It is obviously impossible to expect from all men, and even from those of high integrity and virtue, the unfaltering rectitude of a Colet, or the modest probity of a Lefèvre. Nevertheless, that no champion, fitted by character and attainments for the promotion of ideals of reform on Catholic lines, appeared during the troublous years that followed the death of Colet, and whilst the Lutheran quarrel was extending wider and wider, is a matter for profound regret. The position of Thomas More, Bishops Fisher and Utenheim, and others like these, who held local offices or circumscribed provinces, precluded them from posing as leaders in such a scheme. Within their own limits they supported and advocated it warmly. But leadership required freedom, and that only Erasmus and Lefèvre possessed, of whom the former was inadequate by reason of his vacillation, and the latter by reason of the mildness of his disposition. We shall, however, presently see that Lefèvre actually adopted, for a short time, the rôle of leader, in his own country, but without any widespread results. Colet, if he had lived long enough and had released himself from the bonds of the deanery for the

[1] *Ibid.*, 461F.

purpose, would, in all probability, have supplied the age with the religious leader it required; he might have been able to bring to a successful issue the project of bettering the Church without schism. No doubt, it is idle now to speculate upon the consequences which would have followed from such an enterprise, as he would have conducted it. At the same time, we may be permitted to declare our confidence that he would have resisted all attempts to introduce causes of separation among Christians; for, in his thoughts, reform included in its signification, not disunion, but the realization of a pure and holy conception of Christian unity. But, in England, Colet had sickened and died; in Brabant, Erasmus was engaged in academic disputes, hardly worthy of his attention; and in France, Lefèvre contended, on inferior points, with puny critics. Only one thing was certain—biblical studies were advancing, and the interest in the Sacred Writings spreading amongst not merely the educated classes but the commonalty.

The dispute which Erasmus had with Edward Lee continued for several years.[1] Lee represented the cleverest, and possibly also, along with Latomus,[2] the most sincere class of conservative theologians. If his controversy with Erasmus had been kept free from damaging incriminations against the great Dutch scholar, and with some reverence for the vast learning of the man he was attacking, posterity could not but have admired him for his consistency. We cannot assert that the lack of courtesy and kindliness was exhibited by only one party to the dispute, yet we fear that there was a great amount of truth in the statement of Erasmus that, in raising the angry debate, Lee had been very largely actuated by ambition.[3]

[1] Apparently the contest began in the early part of 1519. Erasmus and Lee, in 1517, were on friendly terms—cp. *Eras. Op.*, III, 1656B.

[2] Erasmus had a controversy with Latomus, in 1519, but it never attained the proportions, or the severity, of that with Lee. Consult *Eras. Op.*, IX, 80-106 (28th March, 1519).

[3] *Ibid.*, IX, 201A, B.

Erasmus not unnaturally dreaded the result of Lee's obtaining the support of his compatriots in the contest. Therefore, he requested Fox to restrain Lee.[1] During October, 1519, he considered it advisable to write two letters to Bishop Fisher for the purpose of explaining his position in the controversy ; but, at the same time, he plainly showed Tunstall that he feared the effect of Lee's representations upon the mind of that worthy, but suspicious, prelate.[2] Again, two months later, Erasmus put forth a long defence of himself against the accusations of Lee, in an epistle ostensibly addressed to Lupset.[3]

Instead of rendering Lee a more agreeable opponent, Erasmus's defences and explanations only increased his boldness and caused him to redouble his assaults during the next year.[4]

To Erasmus the controversy was eminently dangerous. The condition of the times, in consequence of the turn German affairs were taking, almost forbade the progress of biblical science, and the slightest suspicion of false doctrine imperilled the peace, and even life of the rash man who awakened it. The alarm of Erasmus arose from the action of the Curia towards Reuchlin, as well as Luther, in this year, and he did not know but that his own condemnation would follow. His anxiety, therefore, during 1519, to separate the cause of Reuchlin from that of Luther, and his own from both, rested on grounds palpably unheroic ; but, nevertheless, it is hardly fair to say that he showed himself a coward,

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 443B, C, 25th May, 1519.

[2] *Ibid.*, 481D ; 511E, F ; 509F ; 510B. Of the first of these epp. the date given by Leclerc must be wrong, 2nd August, 1519. A comparison of Barham (Francis, *Life and Times of John Reuchlin or Capnion*, London, 1843), pp. 203-4, and *Eras. Op.*, III, 512C would make 2nd October the most probable date.

[3] *Ibid.*, 524-32, 13th December, 1519.

[4] See the ep. to Pirckheimer, 19th March, 1520—*ibid.*, 1861A. The year of this letter is not given in Leclerc, but can be ascertained by a comparison with *ibid.*, 543A and 552D. Consult another ep. of similar purport, to Botzheim, 16th May, 1520, *ibid.*, 239B.

for, in the epistle alluded to, he does not fail to declare that the opponents of Reuchlin and Luther were much more to be blamed than these men themselves. Such, indeed, were the exigencies of the position in which he was placed by this controversy that he found himself forced to perform a deed that all his literary successors have regretted. This was the insertion, against his own better judgment and in compliance with the stated reading of a manuscript he never saw, of the famous gloss of the Three Heavenly Witnesses (1 John v. 7), which is still incorporated in our Authorized Version, as if it were authentic, though Erasmus's reluctant inclusion of it in his third edition of the Greek Testament (1522) is the sole authority for its presence there.[1] Mindful of the supreme difficulties the scholar had to encounter we exonerate Erasmus from blame. The omission of this passage, which stood in the Latin Vulgate but was absent from all the Greek texts consulted by him, laid him open to a charge of favouring Arianism.[2] He could not hope to rebut the accusation successfully with the retort that there were then no Arians to favour and that no evil results had as yet, though three years had elapsed since the publication of the New Testament, displayed themselves.[3] The charge remained and spread amongst the obscurantists and gathered no little additional force from the representations of men who were spending a large part of their energies in detecting heresies. Unquestionably, Erasmus showed weakness in giving even the appearance of victory to such an opponent as Lee. Yet, not the learning of his English critic, but the circumstances

[1] *Erasmi Annot. in Nov. Test.* (4th edit.), p. 697: "Ex hoc igitur codice britannico reposuimus, quod in nostris dicebatur deesse: ne cui sit ansa calumniandi." To these words he adds (*Apol. ad Stunicam*, *Op.*, IX, 353E): "Quanquam & hunc suspicor ad Latinorum codices fuisse castigatum. Posteaquam enim Graeci concordiam inierunt cum Ecclesia Romana, studuerunt & hac in parte cum Romanis consentire."

[2] *Eras. Annot. in Nov. Test.* (4th edit.), pp. 697-8.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, IX, 277E and 280A.

of the time and the vociferations of the obscurantists afforded excuses for the submission ; and it cannot be said in our day that Lee and his supporters appear, to the careful reader of Erasmus's Annotations and New Testament, and to the student of textual criticism, in any other guise than that of *deblaterantes*, as Erasmus himself termed them.

After Lee, two new adversaries attacked him, perhaps even encouraged to do so by that zealous guardian of Christian orthodoxy. These were Stunica, a renowned Spanish scholar who had been chief editor, under Cardinal Ximenes, of the great Complutensian Polyglot—a much more important theologian than Lee, and Sanchio Caranza, the friend and assistant of Stunica. Although the latter never descended to the level of Stunica's coarseness and animosity, he repeated that person's accusations of heresy and of favour towards heretics and Lutherans.[1] And, no doubt, Erasmus was able to adduce patristic authorities for his opinions, but he knew well that the testimony of the Fathers would not protect him always, for his enemies, even the best of them, were capable of representing him as misquoting these early writers.[2]

Beyond question, the fact which Erasmus found most difficult to establish, in all the controversies into which he was drawn during 1519-1530, if one may judge by the persistent repetition of the same calumny, was that there was no real ground for asserting that a connection

[1] *Ibid.*, 287A, 335C, 315C, 423E, F, 424A-B, 431. Stunica published at Rome, in 1522, a particularly venomous book against Erasmus—see *ibid.*, 355D, and Erasmus's reply, dated Basle, 13th June, 1522—*ibid.*, 355D-375B. To this are appended in *Op.* IX, an *Apologia ad Prodromon Jac. Stunicae*, a list of the Spaniard's *Conclusions against Erasmus*, dated Rome, 1523, and an *Apology* against the *Conclusions*, dated Basle, 1st March, 1524. In these, Stunica tries to prove that Erasmus's teachings and sympathies are Lutheran, and Erasmus strives to clear himself of the charge. Consult also *Eras. Op.*, III, 715E.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, IX, 422D : "Videat, inquit (Caranza), Erasmus quam falso citat Ambrosium." To which Erasmus retorted : "Imo videat Sanctius quam facilis sit ad calumniandum proximum suum."

existed between him and Luther. Modern students of the writings and correspondence of both men are able to recognize that, in actual truth, the ideals and aims of the Dutch scholar and the German reformer were by no means alike ; they varied in their estimation of the same facts ; even in the matter of reform, though they both agreed that an improvement in morals and faith was necessary for the welfare of the Church, the mode of proceeding towards this desirable end which the one held to be the most efficacious resembled in few points that which the other advocated.

The consequences of the strife between Lee and Erasmus manifested themselves in the growth of hostility towards the Dutch scholar in a country where hitherto he had met with nothing but the greatest consideration and assistance. It was comparatively easy for the friends of Erasmus to afford him protection from the assaults of ill informed and malignant critics by turning their accusations into ridicule,[1] but men of that sort were only exasperated by laughter and spread their calumnies all the more extensively. To devise some honourable means of appeasing them was an arduous, and indeed a bootless, task ; nothing would have satisfied them save the acknowledgment that they had been correct in all their extravagant misconceptions and that he himself had been ignorant of matters concerning which his knowledge was profound. This formed the problem which confronted Erasmus, and the means he adopted for its solution was a mixture of argument and ridicule. Probably his method was shrewd ; it seems to have been fair, because candid and honest, because free from dissimulation.

But the storm was little more than at its commencement. Soon, not only Brabant, but Spain, England, and France would provide a multitude of adversaries, whose efforts to fasten the charge of heresy upon him

[1] See the long ep. of Erasmus to Hermann von dem Busche, dated from Louvain, 31st July, 1520—*Eras. Op.*, III, 561D-563D.

would embitter his declining years. Hitherto, the last named country had not furnished any assailants, though his studies were not viewed there with favour. It is true that King Francis had invited him, through Budé, to come to Paris and promised him a pension if he came. He had been withheld from complying with the suggestion by many grave reasons, and not least by knowing the kind of ecclesiastics by whom he would be surrounded in the French capital ; he did not need Loriti's sarcastic epistle to enlighten him as to the large numbers of Scotists and Thomists who occupied themselves there with profitless disputations.[1]

The Sorbonne, however, through the zeal of its Syndic, was engaged in investigating heresy much nearer home, and had no time then to spare for Erasmus.

It is a peculiar circumstance that many of Lefèvre's devoted followers came from his own district, or its immediate neighbourhood, namely Picardy and Artois, and that his most inveterate foe, Noël Béda, or Bédier, also came from it. This person, destined to attain distinction as an inquisitor of the faith, the functions of which office he felt conscientiously bound to discharge by reason of his position as Syndic of the Theological Faculty in the University of Paris, was obscure until the controversies in which he busied himself rendered him famous. It is believed that he was born about 1470, but the first certain particular that can be ascertained regarding him is that he succeeded Standonck in the administration of the College of Montaigu, in 1503.[2] Later on, he became chief of the ultra-orthodox party in the Faculty of Theology. The preponderance of this party over the more moderate theologians and its bitter hostility both to what appeared to savour of heresy and to literary studies generally, especially to humanism, as the originating cause of "heretical"

[1] *Ibid.*, 1621.

[2] For some particulars about Béda, consult Caron (Pierre), *Noël Béda*, Toulouse (Positions des Thèses) 1898, pp. 27 *et seq.*

notions, conferred on Béda, from 1520 onwards, the possession of vast influence. For several years, he wielded the power of an ecclesiastical dictator in the interests of a reactionary orthodoxy and would brook no deviation, however slight, from the received conclusions of the schoolmen and their followers. A collision between this truly fanatical man and Lefèvre was inevitable; when it happened, the occasion of it was comparatively trivial.

The notices of Lefèvre's life are scanty, and his movements are not always particularized with that definiteness which is required for the comprehension of his attitude towards the religious and ecclesiastical questions of his era.

Subsequently to the publication of his *Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles*, he accompanied Bishop Briçonnet to Narbonne, where the Cardinal de Briçonnet lay seriously ill. That celebrated diplomatist and churchman died, soon after their arrival, on 14th December, 1514.[1]

About a year later, Briçonnet was translated from the see of Lodève to that of Meaux, near Paris, but he retained the abbacy of St. Germain-des-Prés. Almost immediately after his new appointment the Bishop was despatched on a diplomatic mission in the performance of which he spent two years.[2] It was during this latter period that Lefèvre suffered from an illness which lasted for a considerable time and so enfeebled his faculties as to cause his friends some apprehension.[3] From August 1516 until the following spring this indisposition continued, but by the summer of 1517 he had regained his usual good health, and with it his cheerful, happy, companionable nature.[4]

[1] Herminjard, I, 19n.

[2] *Ibid.*, 43 n.3.

[3] *Ibid.*, 23; *Eras. Op.*, III, 1565A-B, and 211B, 181C.

[4] For a description of Lefèvre's pleasant personality, see the ep. of Glareanus to Zwingli, 29th August, 1517—Herm., I, 24n., and his ep. to Erasmus, 5th August, 1517—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1620.

At this epoch, among the past and present pupils of Lefèvre, and his friends, the greatest enthusiasm prevailed with regard to biblical studies. Not only Budé, but Caesarius, Bérauld, Beatus Rhenanus, Cop, Vatable, Nesen, Louis de Berquin, Valentin, Tschudi, and many others, applied themselves to them so ardently, that Erasmus wrote to Guillaume Huë, Dean of Paris Cathedral, congratulating that dignitary on the progress of these studies in the University and tracing the origin of it to the favour shown to them by the Bishop of Paris (Étienne Poncher) and King Francis.[1] And indeed the major number of French ecclesiastics sadly needed enlightenment.[2]

Lefèvre, who appears to have ceased to reside at St. Germain-des-Prés in the autumn of 1518,[3] began towards the close of that year to compile a history of the Saints, in the form of biographies arranged according to the order of their festivals. He had barely finished January and February when he relinquished the undertaking entirely.[4] About that time he became involved in a dispute regarding a book which he had published during the previous year, in which he had controverted the opinion expressed in the liturgy of the Church that Mary Magdalene, Mary the sister of Lazarus, and the sinful woman of St. Luke vii. 37, were the same person. In December, 1518, he had re-pub-

[1] *Ibid.*, 335, dated 9th August, 1518.

[2] Clichtoue, in 1515, published a work designed to restore to the clergy an intelligent comprehension of the services of the Church, and in his dedication deplored the lamentable ignorance of those who served the altar and praised God without understanding the words they used—Herm., I, 21 *et seq.* Two years later, Capito re-issued this book at Basle, with a dedicatory ep. to Bishop Utenheim, which completes the picture of ecclesiastical ignorance. See also *ibid.*, 39.

[3] *Ibid.*, 45, n.19.

[4] Ep. of Glareanus to Zwingli, 13th January, 1519—Herm., I, 41 and n.1. Farel, in 1530 whilst Lefèvre was still alive, asserted that it was disgust at the wholesale idolatry of which the saints were the objects that determined Lefèvre to abandon this task and devote himself solely to the exposition of Holy Scripture.

lished this book and added a confutation of yet another commonly accepted tradition, viz., that St. Anna, the mother of the B.V.M., had been thrice married, and by each marriage had a daughter named Mary.

This work, strange as it may appear to us in the twentieth century, drew upon its rash author the severest criticisms of the Sorbonnists. Indeed, the dispute passed beyond the confines of France, and elicited replies from foreign scholars, upholding the traditional views.[1] Among his pupils and friends Lefèvre found supporters; Clichtoue published a defence of his opinion,[2] and Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim informed Lefèvre (early part of 1519) that he had been holding certain disputations at Metz with opponents of the newly advanced ideas.[3]

Soon after his return from the mission to Rome on which King Francis had sent him, Briçonnet undertook seriously the business of effecting reforms in his diocese of Meaux; for instance, he required the clergy to reside in their cures and sought to revive a profitable kind of preaching. To accomplish his benevolent designs he held several Visitations, at which he examined into the state of his diocese. Where he found it impossible or inconvenient to enforce his demand for the residence of the parish priest he insisted on the appointment of a capable curate or locum tenens. His admonitions regarding the delivery of sermons proved to be of no

[1] Graf, *Zeitschrift*, etc., pp. 55-6. Stunica, probably attracted by this controversy, turned aside from his attacks on Erasmus to issue, in 1522, his *Annotationes in Jac. Fabrum super epp. S. Pauli*—*ibid.*, p. 32.

[2] Herm., I, 49, n5.

[3] See Herm., I, 49-54, 57-60, and the addendum to p. 51 given in appendix p. 481. Lefèvre had inserted in his *Comm. on the Epistles of St. Paul* an *Apology* which set forth a denial of the Hieronymian origin of the commonly used Latin Version. This judgment now began to be an additional ground for attack by the Sorbonnists—*Ibid.*, I, 58, n.3, and 62. During 1521, a Carmelite, preaching before King Francis, declared that Lefèvre in France, Reuchlin in Germany, Erasmus in Brabant and a Minorite in Italy, were the forerunners of Antichrist—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1695*F*, 646*F*.

avail, for some of the clergy were too ignorant and others too obstinate to comply with his desires in this respect. Accordingly he divided his diocese into preaching-districts and allocated preachers to them, but he permitted the friars to choose some of the districts for themselves, because they claimed, by right of custom, the privilege of sending itinerant preachers throughout the diocese, though, indeed, they had hitherto confined their ministrations to a few of the more important centres only.[1]

The new ideals at this juncture gained a powerful friend, on whose influence and importance sufficient stress has not, until recently, been laid.

The Princess Margaret of Angoulême, only sister of Francis I, and dearly loved by him, was a woman of many singular and good qualities[2]:—

> The learned were dear to her, the unfortunate were for her sacred, all human beings were her brethren, all Frenchmen her family. She did not divide society into orthodox and heretics, but into oppressors and oppressed, whatever was the faith of both; she held out her hand to the latter, she restrained the former without injuring them or hating them. These graces, these gentle virtues of a lovable princess were indeed far removed from the zeal of the Syndic Beda, who lay in wait for heretics, and from that of the Councillor Verjus, who burned them.

Thus it is that a modern historian sketches an extremely attractive character.[3] Margaret was, in 1521, when she first appears as an advocate of religious reform, about 20 years of age. Such a depth of affection subsisted between her brother and herself that he frequently consulted her respecting state affairs and fol-

[1] See the extracts from Briçonnet's synodal addresses, October, 1519, and October, 1521, given by Gast, pp. 50-61.

[2] Gaillard, quoted by Henne, I, 60n.

[3] Consult also Darmesteter & Hatzfeld I (*Le Seizième Siècle en France*), pp. 35, 63-4, 43-4, and II (*Marguerite Chrétienne*), pp. 115 *et seq.*

lowed her advice. She had married, in 1509, Charles, duc d'Alençon.

The correspondence between this lady and Guillaume de Briçonnet reveals the fact that the Bishop occupied a high place in her esteem, partly as a friend, and partly as a spiritual adviser. Notwithstanding the great number of the letters they seldom mention political or current events. They appear, at first sight, to be devotional effusions, records of pious impressions, or interchanges of religious meditations.[1] An estimate of this kind would be correct enough, if there were not here and there amongst them slight allusions to a definite project which would have had a tremendous effect upon the ecclesiastical history of France, and perhaps also of Europe, if it had attained success. Only a few of them have been printed in the *Correspondance des Réformateurs*;[2] but they are sufficient for our present purpose.

If Briçonnet was influenced by Lefèvre regarding a spiritualized religion and a restoration of primitive religious ideals, the prelate, for his part, had a similar ascendency over the young Princess. Through her he hoped to gain the favour of King Francis and by him conduct that reform which the Church so much needed. It is not that Briçonnet aimed at the prosecution of what was known in another generation as a reformation of the Church upon National lines. The later history of himself and his friends proves this absolutely. He desired, indeed, that King Francis, moved by the love of God and the wish to serve Him, should undertake the diffusion of a truer knowledge of the Gospel of Christ throughout France and thereby amend the manifold errors in faith and practice so painfully evident in every quarter of the country.[3]

[1] Dr. Graf, *Zeitschrift*, etc., pp. 65-7. See also Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, V, bk. VI, sections II and III.

[2] Another work which contains some of them and furnishes particulars not given by Herminjard is Genin's *Lettres de Marguerite d' Angoulême*, Paris, 1841.

[3] See Doumergue, I, 107 and App. V (pp. 542-51).

Consequently, in this curious correspondence one may remark frequent allusions to the state of the contemporary Church, and to Margaret's willingness to comply with Briçonnet's suggestions respecting its improvement.

A few extracts from these letters will make clear the plans of the Bishop and the Princess's sympathies with them. Margaret is so full of enthusiasm at being one of Briçonnet's spiritual "band" that she hopes to die in their company.[1] She implores him to enlighten the ignorance of a people destitute of spiritual knowledge, amongst whom she herself is the most ignorant of all.[2] Briçonnet thereupon[3] points out to her the advantage of persuading the King and the Queen-mother, Louise of Savoy, to work "for the honour of God":—

> If the hearts of you three be united to this end, it will be easy to light a great fire.[4] Their present occupations hinder their taking the work in hand, and I am confident that this is the machination of the evil one, who desires to obstruct what he foresees will redound to the glory of God. . . . When you see an opportunity, advance God's work.

From this time, the indications of the Bishop's aims become clearer. Margaret, writing to him (before 22nd November) from Compiègne, adds an important postscript[5]:—

> I do not know whether I ought to rejoice at being numbered amongst those whom I yearn to be like, or to suffer grief at seeing our brethren err under the impression that they are doing right.[6] . . . I think it

[1] Margaret to Briçonnet, July, 1521—Herm., I, 68; and another ep. of July, 1521—*Ibid.*, I, 476.

[2] Epp. of October, 1521—*Ibid.*, 476-7.

[3] Ep. of 11th November, 1521—*Ibid.*, 478-9.

[4] *I.e.*, a fire of zeal, of spiritual earnestness. Cp., the ep. of 22nd December, 1521—*Ibid.*, I, 86.

[5] *Ibid.*, 77-8.

[6] Herm., I, 78, n. 10, thinks this a reference to the condemnation pronounced by the Sorbonne (9th November, 1521), at the instance of Béda,

were best to shut the mouths of the ignorant, and I assure you that the King and Madame have resolved to let it be known that the truth of God is not heresy.

To this Briçonnet replies (22nd November 1521) that it is, indeed, necessary[1]

to pray to our Lord, as you very properly write, to enlighten the darkness of these hypocrites. I know some of their sect,[2] whom God has so visited, that they have returned Him thanks, in my presence, for having withdrawn the scales from their eyes.

In the following month, Margaret sends Briçonnet a letter in which she tells him of the success that had attended the instructions of Michel d'Arande at her court,[3] and she concludes thus :—

At the same time, I beg of you, amidst all your pious wishes for the reformation of the Church, towards which the King and Madame are more than ever inclined, and the salvation of all poor souls, to keep in memory one imperfect, badly shaped, pearl.[4]

In his answer (22nd December) to the above epistle, the Bishop openly deplores the state of the Church,[5] but expresses his pleasure at receiving the Princess's encouraging words :—

I praise the Lord because He has put it into the heart of the King to perform the thing mentioned to me. By doing it he will display himself a true lieutenant-general of the great Power (*grand Feu*)

upon Lefèvre's book on the Three Maries, and the attempt then made before Parliament to have him punished as a heretic. King Francis ordered the Parliament not to disturb Lefèvre.

[1] Herm., I, 81.

[2] He means the Sorbonnists.

[3] Herm., I, 84.

[4] Briçonnet, in allusion to the meaning of her name, had written to her a letter of which the leading topic was pearls—*ibid.*, I, 84 n.2. Some years afterwards, Margaret herself wrote a book of poems and dramatical pieces, to which was given the title, *Marguerites de la Marguerite des Princesses* (1547)—Darmesteter & Hatzfeld, p. 93.

[5] This ep. is given by Herminjard in two portions. The earlier is at pp. 479-80, the later at pp. 84-6, in tome I.

> that bestowed upon him distinguished gifts for fervent exercise in his government and kingdom, whereof kings are only viceroys and lieutenants-general of the King of Kings.

Everything points to the issue of a vernacular edition of Holy Scripture, with the royal assent, as the object of these negotiations. Such, indeed, would seem to have been the case.[1]

Of Lefèvre's movements after the close of 1519 little is known. He appears to have quitted St. Germain-des-Prés and to have undertaken extensive journeys, during 1520.[2] By the early summer of 1521 he was established at Meaux, where his pupil and patron, Briçonnet, appointed him head of the Léproserie (11th August, 1521). Here, in the following spring, he wrote the preface " To the Christian Readers " of a new work on which he had been engaged, his *Commentaries on the Four Gospels*.[3] This book issued from the press in June, 1522. Like his previous publications, it was entirely in Latin, and, consequently, was addressed to the educated, especially ecclesiastics; moreover, according to his usual practice, in it he controverted no defined article of the faith, but limited himself almost completely to the inculcation of the general truths of the gospel and Christian piety.[4]

[1] *Ibid.*, 85, n. 2 and 3; and p. 168.

[2] *Ibid.*, 71, n.10; ep. of Erasmus to Fisher, 17th October, 1519—*Eras. Op.*, III, 511D.

[3] The title of the book is: *Commentarii Initiatorii in Quatuor Evangelia*, etc. The colophon reads: *Meldis. Impensis Simonis Colinaei. Anno Salutis Humanae. MD.XXII. Mense Iunio.*

[4] *Iac. Fabri Stapulensis ad Christianos Lectores, in sequens Opus Praefatio*, a. ij ro. At this point, and in other parts of this preface, Lefèvre reproduces, not only the thoughts, but even the words, of Colet in the *Hierarchies of Dionysius*—See Lupton's edition, p. 150. But Lefèvre and Briçonnet were well acquainted with the writings of the pseudo-Areopagite, for the latter, in his synodal decree of 15th October, 1523, expressly mentions " the Blessed Denis, the disciple of St. Paul, whose writings come next after the Gospels and Apostolic writings"—Herm., I, 154.

In words which became, in later times, the watchword of the evangelical party, he exclaimed[1]:—

> The Word of God suffices. This alone is guide enough to find the life that knows no end. This is the only rule, the only instructress of eternal life: all other things, whereby God's Word affords no light, are not only unnecessary, but even superfluous.

Referring to the faith and missionary zeal of the primitive Church, he declared[2]:—

> There has been no age from the time of Constantine, when the primitive Church began to fall into gradual decay, wherein existed greater knowledge of languages, more numerous discoveries of new countries, or vaster extents of territory within which the name of Christ has penetrated, than the present epoch.

These concluding words refer to Reuchlin's efforts to disseminate the knowledge of Hebrew and other Semitic tongues, the revival of ancient Greek erudition, and the discovery of America by Columbus.

Towards the end of his preface, Lefèvre, desiring to mark the particular value of his present Commentaries, made use of a Dionysian method of illustration; he explained that he regarded them merely as commentaries of purification, and therefore entitled them *Initiatorii*, as introducing the reader to a means of preparing his mind for the reception of a greater effulgence of divine light.

Hardly any opinion he expressed in these Commentaries can be produced which differs from the authorized beliefs of his time. If he mentions Purgatory, it is to advocate the commonly received ideas about it.[3] If he treats of the sacraments, whilst he emphasizes, as was

[1] *Iac. Fabri Stap. Praef.*, a. ij vo.

[2] *Ibid.*, a. iij. This statement regarding the decay of the Church was condemned by the Sorbonne in 1523—Herm., I, 93, n.4. The whole preface *ad Christianos Lectores* and many of the passages referred to here are ordered by the *Index Expurgatorius* (1599), and Quiroga's *Index* (1601), to be deleted.

[3] Fol. 21 vo.-22 vo. and 74 (St. Matt. v. 22, xviii. 34); fol. 228.

his wont, the necessity of faith to their validity,[1] in other respects his views do not vary to any noticeable extent from those usually held by the well informed ecclesiastics of his time.[2]

In strict accordance with the opinions he had put forward in his previous works, Lefèvre controverts the notion that the Church is founded on St. Peter.[3] He expounds the manner in which the Church can remit sins as altogether symbolical, the actual remission being the work of God Himself.[4]

Repentance Lefèvre treats after the style of Erasmus, emphasizing the spiritual, rather than the external, or mechanical, aspect of it, and, indeed, he adopts the very word "*resipiscere*" which Erasmus recommended as the most correct translation of the Greek phrase for "to repent." Lefèvre adds that, when such repentance has taken place, then mortification of the flesh and other outward acts may suitably follow as signs of the abandonment of the evil ways of the previous existence.[5]

Not in one comment, but in several, he defines the value of asceticism and of works done as a means to salvation. And here he approaches closely to the Augustinianism of the Protestant theologians of later years—very closely, it is true, but with a marked difference that exhibits the conservative basis on which all his religious beliefs and instincts rested: he does not deny the importance of works done in obedience to

[1] For example, at fol. 291 *et seq.* (St. John vi. 58).

[2] That he believed in a real, corporeal Presence in the Eucharist is observable from many indications, and not least from the difficulty he experienced in explaining the mode of Christ's Presence in the first Eucharist: "Totum enim extra tunc erat sensibiliter et passibiliter: et totum intra sacramentaliter et impassibiliter."—Fol. 103 ro.-vo. (St. Matt. xxvi. 26).

[3] He argues, with no little acuteness, that our Lord's words, "On this Rock (*petra*) I will build My Church," must relate to St. Peter's confession of the Christ, Whom in every other passage *petra* signifies—Fol. 67 (St. Matt. xvi. 18). Cp. fol. 264 vo.

[4] Fol. 27 (St. Matt. vi. 12).

[5] Fol. 12 (St. Matt. iii. 2). Cp. also fol. 46 (St. Matt. xi. 21).

the command of Christ, but he subordinates them to faith in the Saviour.[1]

Conformably with these opinions, he determines that Justification must be accounted entirely the gratuitous act of God.[2]

In unequivocal language, Lefèvre asserts that the whole Gospel exists in the Sacred Scriptures, and in them alone, and he expresses the hope that, in the future, it will be preached purely (that is, unmixed with human traditions) which is not yet being done anywhere.[3]

We observe, in his comments on the Invocation of Saints, some corroboration of the story that purported to explain why Lefèvre abandoned the biographies of the Saints upon which he had been engaged a couple of years before. It is evident that he had pondered thoroughly the question whether miraculous powers, such as those ascribed to the Saints, were tokens of superior holiness, for he now declared his conviction that their possession would not of itself prove the exalted holiness of those who were permitted to exercise them,[4] and that worship, on account of miracles which have been performed, belongs to God alone.

His discussion of this subject leads him to consider whether it is allowable to approach Christ through the Blessed Virgin or the Saints, and he decides that—

> if humility alone dictates the action of the supplicant, his faith being entirely in the Father of mercies and in Christ His Son, then he approaches worthily.

[1] Fol. 43 (St. Matt. x. 38) and fol. 272, 320 (St. John iii, 14, 15, and xi. 51).

[2] Fol. 233 (St. Luke xviii. 14): "Non nobis sed soli gratiae dei tribuamus." Cp. fol. 76 *et seq.*

[3] Fol. 151 (St. Mark xiii. 10). See also fol. 275 vo. (St. John iv. 1) and 277 vo. (St. John iv. 33-4). It must be remembered that many questions upon which Lefèvre delivered his judgment had not yet been defined by authority. One of these was the relative values of written and unwritten tradition—see Berger, *La Bible*, p. 137 *et seq.*

[4] See the two long comments, fol. 163 *et seq.* (St. Mark xvi. 17-18), and fol. 336 *et seq.* (St. John xiv. 12); also fol. 181 (St. Luke iii. 15).

> He who worships Thee, worships Thee above all saintship and every saint in Thee, and fulfils the truest form of worship.[1]

Although Lefèvre, with his intense belief in the essentially Catholic constitution of the Christian society, lays stress on the mischievous results that follow when the Church is divided into sects and parties, and the injury which is thus done to the purity of Divine service,[2] yet he refuses to approve, in certain specified cases, of the entire supersession of the judgment of the individual by the authority of the Church.[3]

An inspection of the above quoted opinions will reveal the cogency of an assertion that Lefèvre, whilst eager for reform, had no intention of breaking with the Catholic Church. Unquestionably, some of them possessed an inherent tendency towards what were, in subsequent times, denominated Protestant doctrines. But, as we observed with regard to the views that he put forth in his previous works, so also here: if his opinions be weighed carefully, and compared with the utterances of many orthodox divines of his own or earlier dates, they will be found to differ very little, if at all, from sentiments reputedly Catholic and inoffensive. There is, it is true, a strongly marked tendency in the book, yet this is directed not towards any change of authorized teaching, but an enlightenment of, a pouring-out of Gospel-light upon, the doctrines already accepted. That such an illumination would have entailed changes was a consideration quite apart from Lefèvre's thought. So preoccupied was he with the idea of an effulgence of Gospel-light proceeding from the personal intervention of Christ Himself, that he took no note of what might possibly be the effect upon the

[1] Fol. 323: "Qui te colit: te super omnem sanctitudinem, & in te omnem sanctum colit, impletque omnem in veritate cultum."

[2] Fol. 213 (St. Luke xii. 1).

[3] Fol. 278 (St. John iv. 42). As regards the commentaries on St. John's Gospel, Quiroga's *Index* (1601) declares that the passages which require to be expunged are so numerous that it were best to expunge all.

prevalent religious dogmas. However, if he had, indeed, even for a moment, contemplated this aspect of the matter, he would, in all likelihood, have decided that, if the advent of Christ into the counsels of the Church was calculated to involve alterations in the common beliefs, these changes would be, upon that consideration, not only justifiable but imperative. For, beyond doubt, he was convinced that the Christian Church lay in a state of darkness.[1]

At the time of the publication of this book, there did, in truth, appear to be a possibility that his earnest hopes would be fulfilled. Adrian VI had succeeded to the papal tiara, and, with a heart filled to overflowing with eager desires to supply the spiritual needs of the age, had aroused hopes in many quarters that the reforms which the Church was so earnestly demanding would now be seriously undertaken. Erasmus, in an epistle addressed to the new pope from Basle, 1st August, 1522, uttered the aspirations of a large body of Christians when he said that he believed no ecclesiastic to be better fitted, at the present juncture of human affairs, than Adrian for the administration of the highest office in the Church.[2] If there were any doubt as to the meaning of Erasmus's words, it would be dispelled by his remark, in a letter which he sent to the Bishop of Palencia a few months earlier, that he expected the world would be healed of its disturbances by the might of the Emperor and the uprightness of the new Pontiff.[3]

There were, moreover, still existing hopes that a satisfactory issue of ecclesiastical affairs in Germany and Switzerland might be found, for, as yet, no such irremediable acts had been enterprised as would have threatened the preservation of Catholic unity throughout Christendom. But, both here and in the neighbouring

[1] Fol. 307 (St. John ix. 1).
[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 721F.
[3] *Ibid.*, 713E.

countries, the most pressing need of the age was a reformation which, sagaciously conducted without delay in the whole ecclesiastical domain—the courts, public worship, religious teaching and practice, doctrine and dogma, the various classes of the clergy and the functions of each—should apply to all a definite settlement upon a magnanimous, statesmanlike, and yet truly Christian, basis.

CHAPTER X

THE END OF THE MOVEMENT

To all those who longed for an advantageous settlement of ecclesiastical affairs the year 1522 presented many more hopeful indications that their aspirations would be fulfilled than had been observable at any previous epoch. Nevertheless, so far as King Francis was concerned he had not yet become so closely attached to the cause as Briçonnet ardently desired. Indeed, the Bishop, towards the end of September, 1522, advised Margaret to abstain, for the time being, from her efforts to gain him over.[1]

About the same time, probably in reply to, or at least subsequently to, Briçonnet's letter, the Princess wrote to the Bishop in order to report the effect of Michel d'Arande's exhortations upon the Queen-mother. As the Court was about to be transferred from St. Germain en Laye, Margaret urged Briçonnet to visit them without fail when they should have accomplished their journey, as the most feasible means of advancing the cause he had at heart.[2] To this Briçonnet answered (20th October) that he was glad to hear that God had touched the heart of Madame, and he hoped that the

[1] Herm., I, 105. A case of sacrilege occurred at St. Germain en Laye, for which the guilty man was burnt alive (23rd September, 1522). The culprit was a common robber, whose object was to gain possession of a valuable piece of church plate. For all that, the incident may have had some effect in turning the King against the adoption of measures of reform—see the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, p. 158.

[2] Herm., I, 106.

result would appear in the King and the Princess herself. About the invitation extended to him his epistle says nothing, but perhaps this is owing to the fact that only a fragment of the letter is now extant.[1] Certainly, the disposition of Louise of Savoy, at this period, towards the adversaries of reform, particularly the mendicant orders, is made evident by an entry in her diary[2]:—

> The year 1522, in December, my son and I, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, began to perceive the hypocrites, black, white, grey, brown, and of all colours, from whom may God, of His infinite mercy and goodness, defend and protect us; for unless Jesus Christ lies, there is no more dangerous race in all humanity.

Early in 1523, the Princess sent Briçonnet a letter[3] which is most important, on account of a promise concerning which she reminded him. There is some ground for assuming that she here alluded to a French version of the Bible as the thing promised.[4] Briçonnet's reply, on 16th January, 1523, removes the last vestige of doubt on this matter,[5] and, a few months later, the vernacular translation of the Gospels issued from the printing-press of Simon de Colines of Paris. The colophon bears date "The year of Grace One Thousand five hundred and XXIII, the 8 day of the month of June."

Chronologically, this was not the first French version of the Bible. Peter the Eater (*Petrus Comestor*), who held a high academic position at Paris, about the middle of the twelfth century published the *Historia scholastica*, a work which consisted merely of extracts from some of the historical books of the Old Testament accompanied by explanations. Towards the end of the following century, a canon of St. Peter's at Aire, named Guiars des Moulins, produced a translation of the Bible, in which he gave the text of the historical books more

[1] *Ibid.*, 105, n. 2. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, 108. [4] *Ibid.*, 160.
[5] *Ibid.*, 109-11.

completely than Peter, with a commentary. Guiars added a translation of the prophetical and didactical books of the Old and New Testaments, without comments. He called his version *La Bible hystoriée*. During the middle ages it was extensively read, but the translation was very faulty, and in some parts quite unintelligible.[1]

Jean de Rély, Bishop of Angers, and confessor of King Charles VIII, put forth a version of the Bible which, in fact, constituted nothing else than a new edition of the Bible of Guiars des Moulins. According to a remark of Lefèvre's, it must have been published about 1487. Lefèvre, indeed, states that Rély made a new translation, with the King's sanction ; but he is incorrect in this, for the Bishop of Angers only touched up the already existing version.[2] The prefaces to this Bible have a value of their own for the inquirer into the conceptions of the period regarding the use and knowledge of the Bible.[3]

In the course he adopted for the production of his translation, Lefèvre imitated exactly his friend and precursor. The only difference between the two versions was that the latter was a more accurate rendering of the sacred text, for, though Rély's Bible went through numerous editions in the fifty years that succeeded its first appearance, it still remained full of mistakes.

Lefèvre published his version in two parts : the first, containing the Gospels, in June ; the second, containing the remainder of the New Testament, during October and November, 1523. An *épistre exhortatoire*, addressed " To all Christians," accompanied each part.[4]

In the earlier of these prefaces, he asserted that—

> men and their doctrines are nothing, except when they are supported by the Word of God,

[1] Graf, pp. 67-9, with notes 209-14, furnishes ample particulars of these two early French versions. Cp. also Berger, *La Bible*, p. 9.

[2] Graf, pp. 69-70 and notes 215-7 ; Herm., I, 160, notes 2 and 3.

[3] Berger, *La Bible*, p. 34.

[4] The two *épistres* are given by Herminjard, I, 133 *et seq.*, 159 *et seq.*

thus anticipating the proposition which, in subsequent times, became a strong bulwark of the Protestant position. It is true that Luther made it his vantage-ground of opposition at the Diet of Worms ; but we are not to deduce from this circumstance that the Frenchman borrowed the thought from the Saxon ; as far back as 1498 he had expressed a like sentiment.

He began his second exhortatory epistle with the statement that his translation of the New Testament, revised and corrected according to the Latin text, had been put forth at the instance of the great ladies and princesses of the realm, for the edification of themselves and others in the kingdom.

Towards the conclusion of the epistle, he asked a pertinent question :—

> Who then is he that will not deem it a thing convenient to salvation to have this New Testament in the vulgar tongue? What is there more necessary to life, not the life of this world, but eternal life?

to which he himself replied by remarking on the circumstance that in the monastic orders he who is ignorant of Latin is permitted to have his rule in the vernacular and is expected to carry it about with him, to retain it in his memory, and to exhibit it in the chapter-meetings of his society. It is therefore reasonable that Christians should have their rule in the vernacular, should store its precepts in their memory, should carry it about with them and produce it at their chapter-meetings (*i.e.*, at church), where all ought to gather to hear the Word of God. Lefèvre added that it was the King's desire that the life-giving Word of God should be purely preached throughout his dominions.[1]

[1] Graf, p. 77, n. 222, remarks that the Sorbonne, in the Index of 1551, denominates "die Vorrede zu den Evangelien mit Recht eine 'lutherische Epistel,' eine 'Epistel welche nach der Lehre Luthers schmeckt.'" There may have been agreements between the thought of Luther and Lefèvre, but the latter's doctrines were never (at least in his intention) distinctively Lutheran. Observe Doumergue's remark : "Il serait plus facile de soutenir que Le Fèvre n'a jamais été protestant, que de faire

Some time previous to this issue of a French version of the New Testament, Briçonnet had taken into his service a number of Lefèvre's former pupils with the object of supplementing the defective instruction of his diocese in matters of religion. The ordinary parochial clergy were frequently incapable of preaching or giving instruction; and the orders, especially the Franciscans, only attended to the needs of the most prosperous districts. Briçonnet, therefore, though he gave due consideration to the claims of the friars, supplied the vacant districts with preachers of whose ability he had clear knowledge, notably Gérard Roussel, Guillaume Farel, François Vatable, and Michel d'Arande.[1] We have seen that the Bishop had already established Lefèvre in the Léproserie; in May, 1523, he constituted his old preceptor Vicar-general of the diocese of Meaux in spirituals.[2]

Since Luther's vernacular translation of the Bible had appeared in 1522, the surmise would seem natural that the German suggested, if it did not actually contribute anything to, the French version. It may have been that some murmurs began to arise after the first part of Lefèvre's labours had been published; perhaps suspicions of a connection in aim and doctrine between the two reformers were being mooted and rendered plausible by the somewhat injudicious utterances of some of Briçonnet's special preachers. Whatever was the cause of his action, the Bishop deemed it advisable to set forth two synodal decrees on 15th October (that is to say, a few weeks before the second part of the New Testament was published), the one addressed to "The Faithful of the Diocese of Meaux," and the other to

honneur à Luther d'un changement qui ne s'est pas opéré. Le protestantisme fabrisien reste une réalité." (Tome I, 545).

In the action brought by the Franciscans of Meaux against Briçonnet in 1525, of which Bulaeus, VI, 173-84, gives a full account, there was strong opposition shown to vernacular versions of the Bible.

[1] Graf, p. 59 *et seq.*; cp. also p. 77.

[2] Herm., I, 157, n. 2.

"The Clergy" of the diocese.[1] In the former he inveighed against the rashness and novelty of Martin Luther's attempts upon the hierarchical order; he accused him of twisting new and erroneous interpretations out of Holy Scripture, of substituting his own will for properly constituted authority, and of posing as a defender of the liberty of the Church, whilst he was such only in a carnal sense and not according to the truth. Consequently, declared Briçonnet, fearing lest this poisonous plant (*i.e.*, Lutheran doctrine) should spread its roots in the field committed to his care, he conceived it to be his duty to eradicate it utterly. To this end, he prohibited throughout the diocese the purchasing, reading, possessing, and hawking, or the approving, defending, and discussing, of the books of the said Martin Luther; he enjoined, moreover, on all the faithful to destroy by fire such of these books as came into their hands.

The synodal decree "To the Clergy" particularized the difficulties Briçonnet had encountered, the vexations and troubles he had borne, and the assaults he had endured,[2] for several years past, on account of his efforts to nourish his flock with evangelical truth. The Gospel, he said, had been making good progress, but some persons had wrested it from its true significance and had begun to preach against the existence of Purgatory, and therefore against Prayers for the Dead, and also against the Invocation both of the Saints and the B.V.M.[3] Of these unworthy teachers some had

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 153-8.

[2] Briçonnet's attempts at reform roused the anger of many of his parochial clergy; but his principal opponents were the Franciscans of Meaux. Herminjard, I, 156, n. 1, mentions a journey to Paris which Denis de Briçonnet, Bishop of St. Malo and Lodève, was compelled to undertake, in 1521, for the purpose of supporting his brother against his accusers.

[3] It has been pointed out that Briçonnet here animadverted upon opinions expressed by Lefèvre, and therefore presumably held by himself. According to an almost contemporary chronicle, that written by Froment, the Bishop, on this occasion, yielded to hostile pressure—Herm., I, 157-8.

been appointed by himself to the office of preaching, but he now withdrew his licence because they were poisoning the ears of his flock. If the clergy should hear any preach, or affirm the aforesaid errors, they were to hale them before himself and to forbid them to address the people.

Before another two months had passed, Briçonnet issued a mandate to his clergy (13th December) revoking all preaching-licences, except those which the Clementine decretal *Dudum*[1] had conferred. He asserted that in publishing this ordinance he had been prompted by the necessity of taking precautions against the diffusion of Luther's teachings.

It is a matter for conjecture whether Farel was one of those preachers whose inconsiderate zeal had provided Briçonnet's vigilant foes with the opportunities they desired. His departure from Meaux synchronizes so well with the issue of the synodal decrees and mandate that one is almost convinced that these were in some way connected with him.[2] Farel, however, appears to have retained the friendship of the Bishop and his assistants, although it is by no means difficult to observe that his opinions on ecclesiastical questions, both doctrinal and administrative, were not in agreement with theirs.

But, from an entry in the diary of a contemporary Parisian, we perceive that Briçonnet's denunciations were part of a wide scheme of repression directed against the spread of Lutheranism in France. The King and his mother, the Queen-Regent, by advice of their council, had despatched, at this time, numbers of preachers throughout France, "pour prescher la foy catholique, pour abattre et adnichiller les hérésies de

[1] A papal decretal of 1300 A.D., by which the Dominicans and Franciscans were permitted to preach not only in their own churches but also in public places and parochial churches— *Ibid.*, I, 172, n. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 178 *et seq.* A useful handbook on Farel is Chas. Schmidt, *Études sur Farel*, Thèse de Strasbourg, 1834.

Luther," and had provided them with the necessary funds.[1]

In the isolated position in which the Bishop of Meaux found himself, at this juncture, he realized how much he needed the support of his own order. His brother Denis, and perhaps one or two more of the bishops, may have regarded his aims favourably; but, as an order, the French bishops, whether aware of his desires or not, stood aloof, and showed no inclination to follow his example. So long as the rest of the episcopate remained unsympathetic, no permanence of success could be ensured for the measures instituted in the diocese of Meaux. Briçonnet felt the force of this consideration, and, accordingly, he entreated Margaret to employ her influence over the King so that vacant bishoprics might be filled by clergy who would attend to the evangelization of their flocks.[2] The Princess herself had, only a short time previously, remarked how few bishops bestowed as much care on their flocks as Briçonnet.[3] That prelate now insisted that she should not inform him that the times were not convenient for taking the step he was suggesting, since "it was always seasonable to do good," and if, when the opportunity offered, it were not seized, God's anger would be kindled. Her reply to this letter is dated 9th February.[4] She demurely expressed her grief at having been unconscious that "the hour had come," and requested Briçonnet and "Monsieur Fabry and all your friends" to pray for her that she might be awakened from her sleep and freed from her shortcomings in this respect. To this the Bishop made answer,[5] that it was

[1] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, p. 187.

[2] Ep. of 31st January, 1524—Herm., I, 186-8. It is well to remember that Francis had obtained by means of the Concordat the power of nominating to the French sees, and, in spite of the protests of the University of Paris and the clergy, he exercised this power—see *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, pp. 37-8, 63-5, 69-70, and Creighton, V, 265.

[3] Herm., I, 187, n. 3. [4] *Ibid.*, I, 189.

[5] Ep. of 12th February—*Ibid.*, I, 190.

not the Princess, but the episcopal order, which required to be aroused; that the work (of reform) was difficult, yet God could render it easy to His chosen vessels. Briçonnet thereupon solicited the royal family to endeavour seriously to accomplish the work.

Margaret, indeed, so far as her personal authority extended, did what she could, for, towards the close of 1523, she had arranged with Briçonnet that Michel d'Arande should proceed to Bourges, in her duchy of Berry, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel there.[1] But to this course the Archbishop of Bourges objected; he forbade Michel to preach (22nd February, 1524), and threatened with excommunicaton all who should listen to him. The prelate's resistance to her well meant project caused Margaret no little anxiety lest her emissary should be made to suffer for his obedience to her behests.[2] Briçonnet strove to allay her distress,[3] but he pointed out that the Archbishop was exercising his lawful authority, though in a harsh manner. There was, consequently, he added, all the more reason why the King and Madame should apply their attention to the appointment of worthy bishops.[4]

From the correspondence of the French reformers during this year (1524), it is evident that the resistance presented to their efforts began to alter their attitude towards the authorities of the Church. At least this is true of some of them. All the reformers then entertained the warmest feelings of friendship for one another, though there were differences of opinion among them concerning the most suitable means to be adopted for bettering the state of religion.[5] Yet, some of them

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 205, n. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, I, 192.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 198-9 and 200-1, epp. of 24th and 25th February.

[4] The King punished the Archbishop for his action against Arande by depriving him of his temporalities—see Farel's ep. to Scheffer, 2nd April, 1524, *ibid.*, 199, n. 10, 206.

[5] For instance, Lefèvre, writing to Farel at the end of April, 1524, sends cordial greetings to Zwingli and Œcolampadius, and conveys to Farel those of Roussel, Papilion, and Nicolas Le Sueur—*Ibid.*, I, 206.

began now to aim at the initiation of a forward policy, although conscious that a schism might result therefrom. But such a contingency was abhorrent to the minds of Lefèvre and his friends. Indeed, if from this period Œcolampadius, Zwingli, Farel, and their supporters, be taken as forming a progressive, evangelical party, the French royal family, Briçonnet, Lefèvre, and Erasmus, with their sympathizers, must be regarded as a conservative and Catholic party among the reformers. One who had an opportunity of observing Erasmus closely at the beginning of 1523 said of him: "Erasmus has no desire to be a Lutheran, but neither is he an enemy of Luther's."[1] In other words, Erasmus found it impossible to approve of all that Luther was saying and doing, and just as difficult to condemn him altogether. Quite as strongly as Luther he had inveighed against ecclesiastical abuses in doctrine and practice, but, for all that, he never lost the hope that the alterations he advocated would be conducted in and by the Church herself. And we shall presently see how bitterly angry he became at the attempts made by the Evangelicals to bring him over to their side.

There can be no doubt but that, in consequence of the influence which the famous Theological Faculty of Paris possessed over the popular mind in France, the hostility of that great body of theologians proved to be a serious obstacle to the introduction of even moderate schemes of reform into the Gallican Church. Led by men like Noël Béda and Duchesne, the obscurantists rendered, or sought to render, independent thought impossible, and tried to trammel theological learning within the meshes of their own syllogisms. Yet Briçonnet held a position of dignity in connection with the Parisian University, and, in all probability, had many favourers of his views amongst the members of the other Faculties. The Theological tribunal, however, still remained so powerful, though Louvain had

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 212, n. 12.

begun to rival it in prestige, that Briçonnet, in spite of encouragement from the royal family, felt himself bound to promote his designs with caution and circumspection. From the letter of Nicolas Le Sueur to Farel,[1] it is evident that the Sorbonne had the support of the Parliament of Paris.[2] It followed that, during the period which we are now reviewing, the operations carried on by the moderate reformers of Meaux extended hardly at all beyond the limits of the districts in which they were working. We have, therefore, to acknowledge that, although Lefèvre, Roussel, Arande, and Vatable, were seeking to infuse the light of Holy Scripture and the spirit of the Lord into the popular religion, and the people were willingly, even gladly, accepting their ministrations, there is no evidence that their plans were making any real or extensive progress. Lefèvre, in a letter to Farel (6th July, 1524), related that, throughout the diocese of Meaux, the Epistle and Gospel were read every Sunday, and on Holy-days, in the French tongue, and that this was done conformably with the wish of the King; he added that his version of the New Testament was well received by the people.[3] But the letter of Gérard Roussel to the same correspondent, which accompanied Lefèvre's, revealed no such optimistic outlook.[4] Perhaps Roussel, occupying a place, as it were, in the fighting-line, was more fitted to observe the true state of things than the benevolent visionary who had planned the campaign. He could not help exclaiming that France sorely needed reformers who would carry on the work with a bold courage, men of strong character like some of the Swiss Evangelicals. He realized, probably more accurately

[1] Ep. to Farel, dated Meaux, 15th May, 1524— *Ibid.*, I, 216 *et seq.*

[2] The Parliament, for example, in accordance with the desires of the Sorbonne, prohibited the publication of religious books on 13th June, 1521, and again on 21st March, 1522. The Sorbonne (26th August, 1523) decided against the popularization of the Bible (or part of it) and tried to induce Parliament to interdict the sale of the vernacular version. In this they failed, probably through the opposition of the King — *Ibid.*, I, 218, 221. [3] *Ibid.*, I, 220 *et seq.* [4] *Ibid.*, I, 232 *et seq.*

than Lefèvre, that the recent decree of the Parliament of Paris, viz., that no theological composition should be printed unless it first received the approbation of the Theological Faculty of Paris University, was a decree—however easily it might, in particular cases, be overborne by a royal mandate—destructive to mental and religious freedom and a fatal hindrance to the promotion of a purer Christianity than was prevalent. If the Sorbonne had not been dominated by the party of Béda, Duchesne, and other champions of a narrow and degenerate form of scholastic philosophy, a decree of this kind might possibly have been a serviceable instrument for the enlightened guidance of public thought in matters affecting religion. As it was, the Sorbonne aimed merely at the stifling of intellectual progress, the checking of every kind of advance in knowledge. Such a position at that particular epoch, when men's intellects were awakening from an age-long sleep, was clearly untenable ; but it would have gathered around it some elements of melancholy and pathetic grandeur, if it had not been defiled by a relentless, even sanguinary zeal. Let it be remembered that many of the grounds upon which Béda and his colleagues persecuted those who differed from them were not the articles of faith which the highest authorities of the Church had defined, but such as had been only recently promulgated by the Sorbonne itself, that is to say, by Béda and his intimates, for they forced their own views on the Faculty, in consequence of the preponderance of their party in it. Stated briefly, a small body of theologians, and these by no means the most remarkable for learning or sound judgment, not only legislated for the Catholic Church on undefined points of doctrine and practice, but compelled the Church to obey them. So arrogant did Béda, glutted with success, become in later years that the King found it necessary to punish and to banish him from Paris.[1]

[1] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, p. 453 ; ep. of Barthélemi Masson to

But, during 1524, the opposition of the Sorbonne and the Parliament caused the moderate reformers, who had no original intention of disturbing the administrative authorities or the accredited doctrines of the Church, to remark their own weakness in comparison with the strength of the Germans and to waver in their allegiance to their Catholic ideals. Their Teutonic friends, and those of their compatriots who had thrown in their lot with the Germans, were urging them to a stouter resistance and to show a greater independence in principle and method.[1] Apparently, both Farel and Œcolampadius were endeavouring to persuade Roussel to hold public disputations and to display a more courageous front to the enemies of the Gospel.[2] Roussel himself, at this time, would have been glad to take an intrepid course as being more likely to prove advantageous to the task he had in hand. He reminded Farel, however, that the friends with whom he was working thought otherwise. For these said—

> Not yet has the convenient opportunity arrived. . . . If God has not called us to the work, shall we go? . . . Is it not better to possess that faith which submits all things to the will of God, and patiently abides the operation of Deity?

And whilst they thought it possible that Farel's eagerness might accord with the divine intention, they believed that God approves of zeal only when human wishes are ready to submit to modification or rejection at His will.

This patient reliance upon the will of God, which filled the pious hearts of Briçonnet,[3] Lefèvre, and

Erasmus, 29th June, 1535—Herm., III, 306, and *Eras. Op.*, III, 1505D; Graf, p. 204.

[1] Ep. of Œcolampadius to the Seigneur de Marcheferrière, a relative of Briçonnet, 31st July, 1524—Herm., I, 248 *et seq.*, and III, 195.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 271-3 and 274-8.

[3] Briçonnet, writing to the Princess Margaret, 24th February, 1524, in reference to the perils which hung over Michel d'Arande at Bourges,

Roussel also, constituted a wall of separation between the Catholic reformers of Meaux and their Evangelical friends of Switzerland and Germany. But, in truth, the advice that suited the conditions of the Teutonic portion of Christendom unquestionably did not agree with those of the Gallican. Quite apart from the patient waiting for the call of God, the possibilities of success that were likely to attend a militant reforming movement were contingent upon forces which in France scarcely existed, but flourished in Germany. What these forces were, and the power they possessed, Roussel was acute enough to perceive. To Œcolampadius he pointed out that a public disputation on the Gospel would take place in Switzerland or Germany under widely different circumstances from those of a disputation at Paris :—

> How can I, alone and without fame, hope to confront the vast numbers of Parisian theologians, all of them possessing great reputations, who would be to me as a stone wall! It is not of him who wills or him who runs, but of God Who sends. . . . If the season of the harvest of the Gospel has arrived for you, it does not follow that it has also arrived for us. . . . I can easily gauge the difficulties before me in the accomplishment of my appointed task when I see almost the whole Parliament ranged up the opposite side.[1]

As an illustration of the power of the Sorbonnists, Roussel referred to the edict which the Parliament had already promulgated at the instance of the Sorbonne, that no books on religion were to be published at Paris without the express permission of the Theological Faculty being first obtained.[2] And thereupon Roussel very aptly exclaimed :—

> If the bishops, the theologians, the schools, shout their disapprobation, and the people and the Parlia-

and the anxiety of the royal lady, used similar language concerning evangelical zeal — *Ibid.*, I, 273, n. 9.

[1] He means that Parliament was prepared to execute any request of the Sorbonne — *Ibid.*, I, 277, n. 8, 234.

[2] A distinct advance upon the decree of the Lateran Council.

ment agree with them, what shall one poor man do against so many lions?

Nowhere more clearly than in these two letters of Roussel's has the position of the reformers of Meaux been delineated. The difficulties which they experienced were such as always attend those who occupy a middle station. On the one hand, the obscurantists were defending the worst features of the existing system and opposing all attempts to improve it; on the other, the Lutherans and Zwinglians, in their eagerness for reform, were moving forward with a rapidity and an independence of Church order that threatened Christianity with what seemed anarchy and schism. From both the Meldois brotherhood recoiled, but it was not unnatural if some of their company began now to fancy that an adoption of Teutonic ideas might possibly give greater effect to their teachings and greater strength to their position. About this time, accordingly, the reformers of Meaux betrayed an inclination towards Lutheran opinions, especially those which they had always regarded as academically true but opposed to the best interests of the Church in practice, and which, a few years later, they discarded utterly.[1]

The advice that Farel and the Swiss reformers had sent to Meaux was, no doubt, prompted by their own determination to advance more boldly. Erasmus, at Basle, had to endure some pressure from them, by the majority applied in a friendly manner, but by one or two with greater importunity than was agreeable to him. Among the latter Farel was the chief offender,

[1] There can be no doubt but that Dr. Graf is correct when he states (*Zeitschrift*, etc., p. 78 *et seq.*) that Lefèvre's *Les Epistres et Evangiles des cinquante et deux Dimanches de l'an à l'usage du dioecèse de Meaux*, which appeared early in 1525, exhibit a distinct inclination towards Lutheran ideas, and contain harsher allusions to opponents than any other work of his. The Sorbonne discovered no less than forty-eight heretical statements in this book and (6th November) condemned them as *diabolica inventa et haereticorum figmenta*—Graf, p. 175.

and, consequently, Erasmus's epistles of this date are full of bitter complaints of Farel, whom, in derision, he called "Phallicus." If the Evangelicals had left him undisturbed at Basle, Erasmus would probably have refrained from criticizing them severely, but they were eager to secure the support of a man of his vast reputation and abilities for that active propagandism of evangelical ideas which they had in contemplation. But, to them, Erasmus was an even more incomprehensible problem than Briçonnet or Lefèvre. At one time he expressed himself well disposed towards those who wished for a betterment in ecclesiastical affairs.[1] Nay, his own works revealed plainly that he himself desired it, and that strongly. But, nevertheless, he politely but firmly refused to attach himself to any side in a controversy about it which showed the slightest likelihood of eventuating in the formation of parties. Now, when Lutheranism had developed into a powerful antagonist of the papal *imperium*, he felt still less inclined to lend his assistance to what made, according to his judgment, parties in the Church, in fact, schism. For all that, he had already given utterance to a large number of the notions that constituted the principles on which Lutheranism rested, and all men recognized that some at least of his sympathies were with the Lutherans. Yet, in spite of everything (even his own words) and everyone, he remained apart. He wished for reform, but he also wished to continue a Catholic. His attitude, however, was too ambiguous to suit the plans of either side. By the beginning of 1523,[2] the state of affairs in the ecclesiastical world had arrived at such a point as laid Erasmus under the necessity of declaring, openly and definitely, on which side he stood. With his innate astuteness he managed to hold out for

[1] Herm., I, 212, n.12: "Faveo bonis studiis, faveo veritati Evangelicae: id vel tacitus faciam, si palam non licet." These words he uttered in 1520.

[2] Ep. of Glareanus to Zwingli, 20th January, 1523—*Ibid.*

neutrality for a considerable time longer. Towards the end of that year, for the sake of peace, he permitted some of the orthodox to imagine him an anti-Lutheran,[1] and he was not altogether that. It was in 1524 that Farel and his friends sought to make Erasmus declare himself. Farel's bold, sometimes rash, nature could never brook anything like temporizing or trimming. But his interview with Erasmus resulted in nothing save an embitterment of their relations with each other. The Dutch scholar was evidently thinking of Farel when he wrote[2] that—

> Some Frenchmen are even madder than the Germans. All of them have five words on their lips: Gospel, Word of God, Faith, Christ, and Spirit. Yet I behold here many who, I have no doubt, are actuated by the spirit—of Satan!

To Melanchthon he said[3]:—

> Shall we pull down lords, popes, and bishops in order to make room for worse tyrants—scurvy Othos[4] and raving Phallici. There was an extremely short interview between us, but he has made quite a book of it. . . . He calls me Balaam, because Pope Adrian asked me for my advice. I did send some, but the pontiff was not satisfied; he offered me a deanery, which I refused; he expressed a wish to forward money to me, but I told him not to send a penny. And therefore I am Balaam! . . . They (he means the Evangelicals) appear to me to be a new kind of hypocrites with not an atom of the true evangelical spirit among them.

It is certain that others besides Erasmus held this view, if not of Farel (as in Erasmus's case), at any rate of those impatient and incautious reformers who were

[1] He evidently intended Henry VIII to think so of him (4th September, 1523)—*Eras. Op.*, III, 773B.

[2] Ep. to Theod. Hezius, 2nd September, 1524 — *Ibid.*, 809B.

[3] Ep. of 6th September, 1524— *Ibid.*, 818B-819D.

[4] Herm., I, 289, n. 1, suggests that this is an allusion to Otho Brunfels, who had taken the part of Ulrich von Hutten, then deceased, against Erasmus. Cp. *ibid.*, 224, n. 29 and 30.

striving to make rapid progress. Not the least remarkable part of the denunciations uttered against these ardent spirits is the statement that Luther and his adherents would disapprove of them and their reckless proceedings strongly, if they knew them well enough.[1]

The attempt to promote a wide and speedy diffusion of evangelical truth, especially in districts where the Church authorities were hostile, had the natural consequence of rousing the enemies of reform to greater vigour. Force met force, too eager zeal in advancing encountered an augmented zeal in repelling. The increased Evangelical activities of 1524 produced a crop of martyrdoms in 1525. Pierre de Sébiville was burnt at Grenoble in February;[2] Aimé Maigret, taken prisoner at Lyons and conveyed to Paris by order of the Queen-mother, was put on trial;[3] the Sorbonne attacked Caroli on account of his preaching;[4] Mazurier was thrown into prison;[5] Jean Clerc, a working-man of Meaux, was burnt at Metz with revolting cruelties;[6] Chastellain was burnt near Metz;[7] Wolfgang Schuch, a preacher of St. Hippolyte, suffered at Nancy;[8] Saunier and Pauvan, of Meaux, were put in prison at Paris, and the latter was burnt early in the next year. In August, the friars of Meaux renewed their accusa-

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 824B: "Si Lutherus nosset Phallicum, non dubito quin in eum stricturus sit stilum." Glareanus, writing to Myconius, 4th September, 1524, gives a similar estimate of the ardent Evangelicals—Herm., I, 290, n. 10.

[2] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, p. 227-8.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 226. The grounds of accusation against him are recited by Herm., I, 323, n. 5.

[4] Graf, p. 170; Bulaeus, VI, 174; Herm., I, 292, n. 6; ep. of the Sorbonne—*Ibid.*, 378 *et seq.*

[5] Graf, pp. 173-4.

[6] Ep. of Lambert to the Senate of Besançon, 15th August, 1525—Herm., I, 371 *et seq.*

[7] Ep. of Lambert to the Elector Frederick of Saxony, March, 1525—*Ibid.*, I, 344 *et seq.*

[8] *Ibid.*, I, 375, n. 2.

tions against the Bishop, and incriminated Lefèvre for his *Commentary on the Holy Gospels*, in which, they asserted, were to be found several heretical propositions.[1]

The position of the Bishop of Meaux was, at this juncture, one of extreme difficulty, exposed as he was to the impatience of the militant section of the Evangelicals and the blind fury of the obscurantists. On the one hand, he had occasion to issue, on 21st January, 1525, a mandate to his clergy[2] resenting bitterly certain mischievous acts that had been perpetrated in his cathedral and diocese by some too iconoclastically minded reformers. Shortly afterwards, on the other hand, he was constrained by the Parliament to authorize the examination of Saunier and Pauvan by the four commissioners appointed for that purpose,[3] of whom two were Duchesne and Nicole Le Clerc, the intimate friends of Béda. A papal bull reached Parliament in June, and about the same time the University received letters from the Pope and Queen-mother, all three documents urging active proceedings against the favourers of "Lutheran" heresy.

The Evangelicals, for their part, were not idle. If the Cantons and the Pays du Vaud drew up protests against the new preachers[4] or the teaching of Lutheranism,[5] and the Sorbonne devoted its manifold energies to the extinction of the Meldois brotherhood, Zwingli himself addressed a letter to King Francis begging him to silence the Sorbonne and to protect those of his subjects who were endeavouring to extend the cultivation of literature and the knowledge of the Gospel.[6] The advanced Evangelicals, moreover, were now taking

[1] Bulaeus, VI, 183. [2] Herm., I, 320 *et seq.* [3] *Ibid.*, 391, n. 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, 307 *et seq.* [5] *Ibid.*, 354 *et seq.*
[6] Ep. from Zurich, March, 1525—*Ibid.*, 350 *et seq.* From this ep. we learn that the Queen-mother's kindly disposition towards the reformers had changed to one of hostility, because some person had persuaded her that the inculcation of the reformed teaching was detrimental to the peace of the Church and the maintenance of settled government.

an independent road towards reform, and promulgating new conceptions of the Christian ministry and doctrine;[1] some were arranging to lay aside practices belonging to the ancient order of things which they had hitherto observed.[2]

After the disastrous day of Pavia which entailed the captivity of King Francis, the moderate reformers of Meaux, already compromised by the energies of their progressive friends elsewhere, found that their position had become intolerable, for the Queen-regent had now turned against them, and the Parliament had been embittered by the representations of the doctors of the Sorbonne. Consequently, Lefèvre, Roussel, and some others, had to flee to Strasburg in order to escape the vengeance of the triumphant Faculty of Theology, and Briçonnet himself was forced to temporize.[3] Michel d'Arande, however, remained with the Court at Lyons, and, for a time, was safe there.[4]

So far, Erasmus had not been seriously disturbed by the Sorbonne, but the attack now made by that body upon Louis de Berquin was certain to involve him. This gentleman of Picardy, who was in favour at the French Court, held views similar to those of Lefèvre and Erasmus. He had been first thrown into prison in August, 1523. On that occasion, several "heretical" books, which had been found among his possessions, were condemned and burnt in front of Notre Dame, by order of the Parliament; he himself had incurred great risk of sharing the same fate as his books, but the King

[1] Ep. of François Lambert to the Prince-bishop of Lausanne, a prelate who, at one time, had been favourable towards the reform-movement, January, 1525; ep. of Farel to Pomeranus, about 8th October, 1525—*Ibid.*, 328 *et seq.* and 393 *et seq.*

[2] Ep. of Toussain to Farel, 4th September, 1525—*Ibid.*, 375 *et seq.* For instance, Pellican's friends were advising him to discard his monkish cowl, and Œcolampadius was about to cease celebrating the Holy Eucharist with all the ceremonies of the Mass.

[3] Ep. of Jean Tolninus (*i.e.*, Gérard Roussel) to Briçonnet, from Strasburg, December, 1525—*Ibid.*, 405, *et seq.* They left Meaux about October.

[4] Ep. of Bentin to Œcolampadius, 8th October, 1525 — *Ibid.* 399.

had quashed the indictment.[1] It happened, on 20th May, 1525, that three works of Erasmus which had been translated into French were brought before the Sorbonne, in its quality of press-censor, and condemned. When, in the following March, they had been printed, in spite of the condemnation by the Sorbonne, that body inserted the name of the reputed translator, Berquin, in their denunciation. Although Berquin was suspected of being the interpreter, no proof of the fact was available at this time. Béda therefore wrote to Erasmus,[2] on the day after the first decision against the books, accusing him of having been the originator of vernacular translations of the Bible and theological works, and pointing out, as the consequences of his ill-omened advice, the events that had occurred in the diocese of Meaux on account of Lefèvre's labours in that direction among the uneducated people.[3] He informed Erasmus that at least three of his compositions had been turned into French, viz., the *Praise of Marriage*, *The Lord's Prayer*, and *The Creed*, and that some members of the Faculty believed Berquin to be the translator. Accordingly, he warned Erasmus that he ran a grave danger of being consigned to the same doom as Lefèvre by "our Masters" (*i.e.*, the Doctors of the Sorbonne).[4] Cautious as Erasmus ever was by inclination as well as policy, his retort to Béda proved him worthy of his reputation for wit and scholarship[5]:—

Thy kindliness caused thee to fear that I might

[1] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, pp. 169-70.

[2] Herm., I, 352-3.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1708F: "Suis damnis expertus modo Dominus Episcopus Meldensis quidnam fructus plebs illiterata suae Dioecesis ex Jacobi Fabri sudoribus in eo negotio collegerit." Erasmus (ep. to Pirckheimer, 6th June, 1526) asserted that the cause of Lefèvre's flight had been his translation of the Gospels into French—*Ibid.*, 940E; Herm., I, 421. Graf, p. 78, maintains that the immediate cause was the threatened investigation into his *Gospels and Epistles of the fifty-two Sundays*.

[4] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1709C: "Ne futura tibi et Fabro sit communis sors cum Magistris nostris."

[5] *Ibid.*, 866D, 869A. Erasmus's reply is dated 15th June, 1525.

> come to the same fate as Lefèvre. I, however, fear still more, most excellent Bedda, that you (Sorbonnists) will come to the same fate as the theologians of Germany, whose authority, in these times, is so great that if they find fault with anything, that very thing becomes popular just because they condemned it. . . . So far as Berquin is concerned, I have had no business with him; yet, if thou wilt let me whisper a little word of truth in thine ear, what was the reason of including in the list of articles (against him) this, namely, that he had written that the Holy Spirit should be invoked by preachers rather than the Virgin Mary? It was, sayest thou, an offence against a laudable custom. Laudable it may be to-day, but the ancients knew nothing of this laudable custom. . . . However, if it be granted that it is laudable, wherein does he err who draws attention to what is more laudable? But what a thing it is, to put the life and reputation of such a man in danger for the sake of trifles of this kind!

But to Berquin Erasmus wrote, on 25th August, 1525[1]:—

> I believe that what thou art doing thou doest with the best intentions, most learned Berquin, but thou art burdening me, already more than sufficiently weighted, with great odium, by translating my little books into the vulgar tongue and making them accessible to the understanding of these theologians, amongst whom I am aware are many honourable and upright men; the ill-nature of the few, however, too frequently overcomes the moderation of the many. . . . And perhaps thou thyself wouldest be consulting, friend Berquin, thy own best interests, if thou dost not rouse again that quarrel (of thine) now that it has been settled. Our Papilion is gone, and Deloin before him. . . .[2]

The commissioners appointed by the Parliament and

[1] *Eras. Op.*, III, 884C-E.

[2] Erasmus probably meant to warn Berquin what to expect, for a rumour was then abroad that Papilion had been poisoned by the enemies of reform. Cp. *Eras. Op.*, III, 1698B, 944C, and Herm., I, 432.

the Sorbonne to proceed against heresy decided (2nd August, 1525) that Lefèvre's version of the New Testament should be burnt. In the same month, the process of the friars against Briçonnet was concluded in favour of the prelate; he was honourably discharged.[1] By a decree of 3rd October, Parliament determined that the judges delegated to that office should have the cases of the following persons brought before their tribunal: Masters Pierre Caroli and Martial Mazurier, doctors of theology; Master Gérard (Roussel), Treasurer of the Church of Meaux, and Master Jacques Fabri. Besides these, Fr. Jean Prévost and Mangin were to be examined. Parliament also instructed the said court to apply to the Queen-regent to send to Paris for examination Master Michel (d'Arande).[2] On 6th November, the Sorbonne passed a censure on Lefèvre's *Exhortations on the Epistles and Gospels, for the use of Meaux*, and Parliament, on 5th February of the following year, in ratification of this decision, prohibited its use.[3]

When King Francis heard of the high-handed actions of his Parliament he despatched to it, from his Spanish prison, a mandate (12th November) ordering the suspension of all proceedings against Lefèvre, Caroli, and Roussel, until such time as he himself should have returned to France. But Parliament had no intention of abandoning, even at the King's command, its execution of the wishes of the Sorbonne; it forwarded, on 15th December, to the Queen-mother a justification of the course it was pursuing and forthwith re-issued the authority to the inquisitorial judges to continue their process against "Fabri, Caroli, and Ruffi."[4]

[1] Bulaeus, VI, 184. Bulaeus adds: "Vita & Gesta Guillelmi Briçonnet, tunc Episcopi Meldensis eum omnino reddunt a calumnia istiusmodi & a suspicione haereseos immunem: quippe nemo acrius Lutheranam haeresim insectatus est, nemo ferventius Catholicam tutatus." [2] Herm., I, 401, n. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, 402, n. 2; Graf, p. 78, note 225; *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, p. 276. [4] Herm., I, 403, n. 4.

As for Berquin, it was not to be expected that those who had caused his incarceration on a previous occasion, and had been disappointed by the King in their procedure against him, should overlook their present opportunity of re-opening the process. Early in 1526, therefore, he was seized at Abbeville, brought to Paris, and imprisoned.[1] His doom appeared certain now. The inquisitors condemned him, and, on 12th March, he was handed over by them to the lay power for the extreme penalty meted out to heretics.[2] By this time, however, the Queen-mother had acquired an increase of authority from the approaching return of her son to his kingdom. Accordingly, she commanded the court to stay its action pending the arrival of the King.[3] Francis himself, on the very day he set foot in France (17th March, 1526), wrote to the Parliament an order to the same effect, and repeated it a few days afterwards. For this act of clemency the Princess Margaret thanked her brother,[4] and in a letter to the officer who subsequently released Berquin from his prison she declared that she felt the kindness done to that poor man as if it had been done to herself.[5]

Immediately on regaining his freedom, Berquin sent an epistle to Erasmus,[6] which is of some importance, as it proves the slight, not to say contradictory, grounds upon which his judges had condemned him :—

> The hornets have been busy again. They accused me of heresy before Parliament and the papal commissioners, for no other reason than that I had translated into the vernacular some of thy lucubrations, in which (they have dared to maintain) are to be found most impious heresies. . . .
>
> It would be too long, most learned Erasmus, to

[1] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, pp. 277-8.
[2] Herm., I, 426, n. 13.
[3] Herm., I, 424, n.
[4] Ep. of April, 1526— *Ibid.*, 421 *et seq.*
[5] *Ibid.*, 422, n. 2.
[6] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1712E-1714B, dated 17th April, 1526.

recount what answers I made. . . . I did not omit innumerable protestations, as they are called. But they, treating my protestations with scorn, treating the Queen-mother's edict with contempt (though I had not said a single word opposed to the Catholic faith) . . . were not afraid to pronounce me a heretic and a favourer of heretics. . . .

Here thou hast the whole tragedy of Berquin. One matter especially ought to be mentioned: they have not drawn any article from thy Paraphrase dedicated to the King (a copy of which translated by me they took from me among other books), and thou canst guess why.

Not only was Berquin rescued from his persecutors, but the exiles at Strasburg received a summons to return. Lefèvre, therefore, set out for the south of France (end of April, 1526) by way of Basle, where he had some friendly intercourse with Erasmus;[1] but he took up residence first at Angoulême and afterwards at Blois.[2] We find Roussel also at the latter place in June.[3] Michel d'Arande, who had fled from Lyons in October, 1525, and had joined Lefèvre and Roussel at Strasburg,[4] now came back to the Court.[5] On 17th June he entered into possession of the bishopric of St. Paul-Trois-Châteaux in Dauphiné (to which he had been appointed either in 1525 or early in 1526) and was received there in solemn state.[6]

All the members of the Meldois sodality were thus happily reinstated in their native land by the returned monarch. But the flight of the principal agents of their enterprise marked a period in the realization of their hopes. When the exiles arrived in France, they were confronted with a wholly new aspect of the question of

[1] Ep. of Erasmus to Jacques Toussain at Paris, 16th May, 1526—*Ibid.*, 938D.

[2] Herm., I, 440, n. 14.

[3] He wrote from Blois to Farel on 17th June—*Ibid.*, 438 *et seq.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 406, n. 8, 409, n. 1.

[5] See Agrippa's ep. to him, 7th May, 1526—*Ibid.*, 427 *et seq.*

[6] Cp. the quotation from *Nova Gallia Christiana*, t. I, in Herm., I, 399, n. 4.

reform. This they either did not at once perceive, or, if they did, they believed that a favourable change might soon occur. Everything, undoubtedly, depended on the course that King Francis would take. It is true that he afforded protection to Lefèvre, Arande, Roussel, and the rest. Even Pierre Toussain, a more militant reformer than those mentioned, was relieved of all fear of danger to his person in Paris.[1] But it soon became evident that the King was disinclined to employ stringent means for the restraint of Béda, Le Couturier, and the rest of the obscurantists.[2] Apparently, in the earlier years, the only forces which had disposed him towards authorizing the introduction of measures calculated to better the state of religion in his kingdom had been the affection he bore for his sister and the influence of some of his attendants. Those forces were still in operation, but external circumstances had now arisen which modified considerably their power over the will and policy of the monarch. The more militant, not to say revolutionary, attitude that Lutheranism had begun to assume towards ecclesiastical offices and doctrines, the King's own loss of prestige through his reverses and captivity, and the excesses of many ill advised, rash, and turbulent exponents of reform, produced the natural result of causing Francis to lend a deaf ear to all suggestions or plans which had even salutary changes for their objective.

Count Sigismund von Hohenlohe, Dean of the Chapter of Strasburg,[3] entered into correspondence with

[1] It was quite unnecessary, therefore, for Erasmus, in his letter of congratulation to King Francis (16th June, 1526—*Eras. Op.*, III, 943-4; Bulaeus, VI, 194-5), to urge him to guard Lefèvre and the others from the assaults of the Sorbonne.

[2] The ep. referred to in the previous note contains a grave indictment of the cruel acrimony of the "Beddaici," as Erasmus termed them (in another ep. of about the same date—*Eras. Op.*, III, 961A).

[3] Herm., I, 348, n5, refers to Roehrich's *Histoire de la Réformation en Alsace*, 1re partie, for a full account of this ecclesiastical nobleman's work on behalf of reform. It was to Count von Hohenlohe that the French refugees at Strasburg had been indebted for their safety.

the Princess Margaret early in 1526. He believed France to be ripe for a more definite advance in the propagation of evangelicalism, and he proposed to the Princess to pay her a visit for the purpose of furthering the cause. But, in April and May, she wrote to him that he had better wait awhile.[1] July arrived and the " suitable opportunity " was still remote.[2] There is no evidence that the Count ever accomplished his journey or attempted to carry out the scheme he had designed.

Count Sigismund's efforts and the consequences that attended them, were typical of others of a similar kind made about the same time. For example, Toussain, in a letter of 26th July, 1526, to Œcolampadius, related that he had had some conversation with Lefèvre and Roussel, but " indeed Lefèvre has no courage."[3] Of Briçonnet he reported that it was there said that " he was latterly not dealing frankly with the Word, being more anxious to please men than God."[4]

But Toussain's statements were simply the expressions of opinion upon the one side. We hear the other view of the situation in the epistle that Roussel sent to Farel on 27th August[5]:—

> Our circumstances are somewhat easier than hitherto, and we have some hopes that the rage of our opponents may be restrained and a certain degree of freedom restored to us.

These expectations can hardly have attained fulfilment, for the burnings at Paris had begun anew.[6]

[1] *Ibid.*, 420 and 430.

[2] *Ibid.*, 441 : " Les circonstances me paraissent encore telles, que votre venue ici ne pourrait vous procurer la consolation que vous désirez. . . . Mais dès que je croirai le temps propice, j'espère en Dieu que je ne vous ferai pas languir."

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 447 ; also *ibid.*, 463 (ep. of Toussain to Farel, 9th December) where Toussain repeats the same opinion of Lefèvre but has great hopes of Roussel.

[4] *Ibid.*, 446.

[5] *Ibid.*, 449. Note Agrippa's letter of 18th September to a Court physician—*Ibid.*

[6] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, pp. 291-2. Shortly after the King had returned from Spain, Farel had advised Arande to play the Christian.

Nor was the situation, to any extent, altered for the better by the following December, when Roussel again wrote to Farel. Though protected by the Princess Margaret, his preaching at the Court brought him into imminent danger of his life.[1] Nevertheless, he and his friends were still striving to interest in the cause all such persons as they had the opportunity of meeting.[2]

Here then the period may not unfittingly be put to the work of the Meldois teachers as Catholic reformers. Their endeavours to improve the condition of that portion of Christendom which lay around them, by pacific means, eventuated in complete failure. And yet, they had had no idea of attempting to supersede any authorized or defined doctrine of the Church, as it then stood; they had conceived no intention of overthrowing any department of settled order in the economy of the ecclesiastical empire; they had designed to maintain, in its highest and noblest sense, the Catholicity of Christ's Church. From time to time, in subsequent years, correspondents might remark to each other the gracious disposition of the King, or the Cardinal de Lorraine, towards the Gospel.[3] But these favourable inclinations were little else than the exigencies of diplomacy or the vagaries of a tortuous policy. One thing seems clear. After the year 1526 had passed, there vanished all hope of a truly Catholic reformation upon French soil. Even Roussel, Lefèvre, and their helpers, perceived it, and, having no wish to employ the methods or the teachings of their Evangelical friends, realized that their enterprise was at an end.

The latter replied that this was his wish, but that many difficulties had to be overcome—Herm., I, 469.

[1] *Ibid.*, 458: "In magno vitae discrimine versamur; quotidie audio inimicos accrescere mihi, sed mihi adest Dominus, qui me consolatur, cui sint gratiae. Tuas et fratrum requiro preces, ut Dominus nos captivitate eximat qua premimur." He had used almost the same words on the 27th August—*Ibid.*, 450. [2] *Ibid.*, 459, 464.

[3] See the epp. of Capito to Zwingli, 1st January, 1527—Herm., II, 3 *et seq.*; of Martin Bucer to Luther, 25th August, 1530—*ibid.*, 271 *et seq.*; of Myconius to Bullinger, 28th February, 1534—*ibid.*, III, 145 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XI

PARTISANSHIP

EVEN whilst King Francis was affording protection to the Meldois company the Sorbonne, led on by Béda and his colleagues, never wavered in its hostility to them as well as to the aggressive reformers of Switzerland. Its enmity towards the latter is neither inexplicable nor unnatural. Those who assume the offensive, as Farel and his Swiss friends then did, usually meet with a resistance which, when successful, occasionally develops into violence and oppression. But Erasmus, when he noted the bitter hatred of the obscurantists of the Sorbonne and the " pseudomonachi " towards Lefèvre, Briçonnet, Roussel, Berquin, and himself, could not discover any reason for this hatred, save that of fear lest their own false teaching should be exposed.[1] Whatever the cause of their inveterate dislike, the Sorbonnists only awaited a favourable opportunity to exhibit the full strength of their animosity. It was in vain that Lefèvre dedicated his Latin *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (August, 1527) to Antoine du Prat, Chancellor of France, and recently created Cardinal, as if he thought this powerful courtier would be likely to support an effort to spread biblical knowledge.[2]

[1] Epp. of Erasmus to Lefèvre, 24th March, 1527, to John à Lasco, 17th May, 1527, and to Vergara (a Spanish theologian of eminence), 2nd September, 1527—*Eras. Op.*, III, 972C, 979E-980A, 1014D.

[2] *Iac. Fabri Stapul . . . Comm. in epp. Cath.* (edition of Cologne, 1570), Dedicatory epistle to Du Prat, p. 6: " Quos catholicis epistolis, cum nouis Commentarijs, luce aspirante CHRISTO, protinus donabo, si

In vain also did the King himself (July, 1527) call upon the University to restrain Béda from further attacks on Lefèvre and Erasmus. That celebrated Dutch scholar, too, addressed in his own defence the Sorbonne (on 12th November) and the Parliament (on 14th November).[1]

In spite of all these endeavours, the *Colloquies* of Erasmus, on the motion of the Syndic Béda, were condemned (June, 1528) by the University, and a notice of the decree was despatched to the author.[2]

During 1528 several circumstances conspired to provide the obscurantists with that ascendency for which they had been watching and waiting. One was the favour shown to them by the Queen-mother and the Chancellor Du Prat. Another was that, in the early part of this year, the provincial councils of Sens, Bourges, and Lyons issued decrees for the punishment of the heretics. Following upon this accession of power came an opportune occasion for its exercise. On the morning of 1st June, it was discovered that, during the night, an act of fanatical iconoclasm had taken place: an image of the B.V.M. and Holy Infant had been mutilated in one of the streets of Paris. Thereupon, the indifference of the Parisians generally and the King changed into anger and a desire to avenge the insult.[3] A number of burnings followed, and for the time being Béda and his companions were all-powerful.[4] Indeed,

publica luce tuae autoritati digni videbuntur." This dedication was written early in 1525; but it was significant of the circumstances of the time that the Commentaries had to be published outside France—at Basle by Cratander. See Herm., II, 53 *et seq.*; Graf, p. 86.

[1] Bulaeus, VI, 200-10; *Eras. Op.*, III, 1031-40.

[2] Bulaeus, VI, 210-11.

[3] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, pp. 347-51; Guiffrey (Georges) *Cronique du Roy Françoys premier de ce Nom*, publiée pour la première fois, avec une introduction et des notes, Paris, 1860, p. 67 and App., pp. 446-64; ep. of Erasmus to Count Neuenar, August, 1528—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1136E-F; ep. of the University of Paris to the Parliament, 12th June, 1528—Bulaeus, VI, 210 (bis).

[4] *Journal*, etc., p. 375.

so great was the terror caused by the efforts of the Sorbonnists, not only against the perpetrators of sacrilegious outrages, but against all who desired to employ the slightest freedom in religious thought or literary studies, that Erasmus experienced a high degree of alarm.[1] To Berquin he forwarded two letters (middle September, and 23rd December, 1528), warning him of the dangers he was incurring, the power of the forces arrayed against him, the endeavours of Béda to discredit both Lefèvre and himself (Erasmus), and the extreme inopportuneness of translating into French, at such a time, the works which had been composed only for the learned.[2] And, in truth, the fears of Erasmus were not without solid foundation. The sole protector of those whom the Sorbonne attacked, and in her estimation most unjustly, was Margaret, the King's sister. After the recall of Lefèvre from Strasburg Francis had shown him some kindness by appointing him tutor to the royal children. This, by keeping the old man attached to the Court, had hitherto shielded him from all open hostilities. Berquin the King appears to have esteemed very profoundly, for some reason at present unknown.[3] Nevertheless, either in consequence of hearkening to his advisers or through the pressure of his political schemes, the French monarch, about this period, exhibited an inclination to permit the Sorbonne to wreak its vengeance on those who had aroused its animosity. That he could have intervened to save Berquin, and did not, is at least possible. The process against the Picardois gentleman is indeed one which illustrates the extremity of religious bitterness and reveals the inhuman eagerness of his judges to

[1] Ep. to Pierre Toussain, 3rd September, 1528—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1106C-D. Margaret, who had married Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, on 30th January, 1527, retained Roussel and Toussain as almoners—Herm., II, 4, n. 2, 155, n. 11.

[2] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1134B-D, 1132E-1133A; Herm., II, 156, 159.

[3] Queen Margaret reminded her brother of it when she was interceding for Berquin in 1529—Herm., II, 169, n. 7.

destroy him. Several contemporary documents narrate the story of his trial and suffering;[1] of these two give full particulars, the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*,[2] and Erasmus's letter of 1st July, 1529, to Charles Utenhovius.[3] The latter begins thus :—

> Louis de Berquin, in his last letter to me, promised to write to thee. Thou wilt in vain expect that epistle, for on the 10th of the Calends of May he exchanged life for death, having been burnt at Paris in the Place de Grève. On what grounds I know not yet for certain. I have merely heard that the business of passing sentence was entrusted to twelve judges. When the time drew near, he was cast into prison—not a lucky augury. It was determined that his books should be burnt, that he should be made to abjure his opinions, have his tongue pierced, and should then be imprisoned for life. On this unexpectedly severe sentence being reported to him, he appealed to the King and the Pope. The judges, not liking the mention of an appeal, said, " If thou dost not accept this sentence, we will make it impossible for thee to advance any appeal," and the next day they decided to deliver him to the flames.

Erasmus added that, according to the account which had reached him, the first head of accusation was that Berquin had advocated the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular. Contemporary records state that the Picardois suffered[4]

> for the offence he had committed by being of Luther's sect and making ill books against the majesty of God and His Glorious Mother.

When Jean de Selve, the First President of Parlia-

[1] Amongst others, the *Cronique du Roy Françoys*, p. 76, and the ancient MS. quoted in n.1.

[2] pp. 378-84.

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1206D, E *et seq.*; also Bulaeus, VI, 217-26. According to Eugène de Budé, *Vie de Guillaume Budé, fondateur du Collège de France*, Paris, 1884, pp. 242-8, Budé was one of Berquin's judges on this occasion and did his best to save the Picardois from his foes.

[4] *Journal*, etc., p. 382.

ment, announced the sentence of the judges to Berquin on Friday evening, 16th April, he renewed his appeal and signed the writ. On the next morning, Saturday, Selve again tried to obtain Berquin's acceptance of the sentence, but in vain. Thereupon, the court assembled and decided that he should die. Accordingly, between 9 and 10 o'clock that day, the Picardois was condemned to be burnt alive and to have his books burnt first in his presence. On the same day, the execution took place. This scandalous haste proceeded from the anxiety of his foes to prevent the possible intervention either of the King or the Queen-mother;[1] for, on at least two previous occasions, the royal favour had rescued Berquin from them.

How far it is true that any opinion advanced by Louis de Berquin savoured of Lutheranism is not easy to discover. We may note, indeed, that the term "Lutheran" was one applied indiscriminately, at that time, to all who tried to promote reform, irrespective of the particular views held by them.[2] But, undoubtedly, Berquin himself had no desire to be reckoned a Lutheran. Moreover, Erasmus, in delineating his character, enumerated some traits which by no means indicated a tendency towards the Lutheran ideas that were then prevalent (*i.e.*, in 1528-9), and immediately added: "As for Lutheranism, he had the greatest abhorrence of it."[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 383: "Ce qui fut faict, et expédié ce mesme jour en grande diligence, affin qu'il ne fût recouru du Roy ne de madame la Régente, qui estoit lors à Bloys."

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 250, 284, 327, etc. Cp. p. 277: "Et faut noter que la plus grande partie de Meaulx estoit infectée de la faulce doctrine de Luther, et disoit-on, qu'un nommé Falry, prestre, estudiant avec autres, estoit cause des dictz embrouillemens."

[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1207E. Crespin also, in his narrative (cited by Herm., II, 187, n. 22), bears the same testimony. Cp. the ep. of Erasmus to the Bishop of Augsburg, 11th August, 1530: "Ante complures menses exusserunt quendam Lodovicum Berquinum, virum optimum ut praedicant, nec erat Lutheranus. Odium theologorum ac monachorum, libera lingua, simplicitas & hujus comes fiducia perdidit hominem"—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1302E.

Lefèvre had already (that is to say, in 1528) been able to complete his translation of the Bible into French. But even the favour of the King could not procure him a printer or publisher for it in France, because the Parliament of Paris had passed a decree (5th February, 1526) that no printer should, under severe penalties, print any Lutheran book, and that no one "should presume to translate from Latin into French the Epistles of St. Paul, the Apocalypse, or any other books of the Bible." His version, therefore, of the Old Testament appeared at Antwerp in the above-mentioned year.[1] But the Sorbonnists, flushed with their triumph over Berquin, soon tried to attack even those in sanctuary at Court,[2] whilst the bishops and theologians were endeavouring to suppress every kind of reform.[3] At this period Roussel was executing the office of an almoner to Queen Margaret, and Lefèvre had charge of the royal library in the Château de Blois. It is, indeed, possible that King Francis found that the exigencies of his political designs deprived him of the liberty of protecting such persons as were suspected, whether rightly or wrongly, of heresy, or obnoxious on other grounds to the powerful Faculty of Theology in the University of Paris. Though we may harbour some doubts respecting any violent threats having been uttered by the King to Lefèvre or Roussel, there does, in fact, appear to have been some disturbance, at this time, of the former's tranquillity in his retreat among the King's books, for he applied to Queen Margaret to secure the monarch's permission for him to withdraw

[1] *Journal*, etc., p. 276; Herm., II, 180, n. 19.

[2] According to the report which Œcolampadius sent to Zwingli (ep. of 4th May, 1530) King Francis was actually threatening Roussel and Lefèvre for the influence they had exerted over the Queen of Navarre: "Minatur ignem doctissimis Gerardo Rufo et Jacobo Fabri, et aliis, nisi dissuaserint sorori quod persuaserunt"—Herm., II, 249.

[3] As a matter of fact, they were censuring not only reform but even the assertion that a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was necessary for the perfect understanding of Holy Scripture—*Ibid.*, 484.

into still greater obscurity. Accordingly, the Queen wrote to the Grand-master, Anne de Montmorency, towards the end of May, 1530[1]:—

> The good man Fabry has written to me that he has had some little trouble at Blois.[2] He would willingly go for a change of air to visit one of his friends for a time, if it were the King's pleasure to give him his *congé*. He has put the library in order, numbered the books, and made an inventory of them which he will deliver to whomsoever the King wishes. I beg of you to ask the King for his *congé*, and let me know how he is and good news of yourself, and thereby you will give peculiar pleasure to her who is
>
> Your good aunt and friend, Margaret.

King Francis gave the permission required, and Lefèvre retired to Queen Margaret's Court at Nérac.

To all intents and purposes, the life-work of the aged Étaplois had already ended. He was a very old man, and long since had ceased to possess the capacities for guiding or controlling a movement of any kind. To preserve the balance, to maintain the Catholic equilibrium, between the fierce partisans of aggressive reform, on the one hand, and militant obscurantism and encroaching curialism, on the other, would have required very eminent powers of mind and body, and an inexhaustible patience. It is doubtful if Lefèvre, at any time in his life, had been endowed with these qualities. Patient to a very great extent he certainly was, and gentle, and unswervingly loyal to his principles, but these, in all likelihood, formed the sum of his moral vigour. And when he grew old, his gentleness increased until it became almost timorous caution. The controversy over the comparatively trivial question of the Three Maries revealed at once the compact strength of his foes and his own weakness in meeting opposition.

[1] Herm., II, 250-1.

[2] "Le bon homme Fabry m'a escript qu'il s'est trouvé ung peu mal à Bloys, avecques ce qu'on l'a voulu fascher par delà."

Consequently, when, in 1530, King Francis permitted him to retire, his withdrawal from Blois proved, in truth, what it was intended to be,[1] the final exit from the stage of human effort of the old Étaplois who, in his own exalted sense of the expression, was a true Catholic.

For six years longer he lived in the peaceful home which Queen Margaret had provided for him. He saw, from time to time, how reformers, not always orthodox, not always Catholic, came for succour in their distress[2] to the gracious lady who had once hoped to be the centre, "the mother," as she had called herself,[3] of a noble band of Catholic reformers, but who had drawn back when she discovered that she had to choose between a reformation and a schism in the Gallican Church.

A few notices of him in his retirement exist. One belongs to the close of the following year. On 30th December, 1531, Aleander, Luther's old enemy and Erasmus's doubtful friend, wrote to Sanga,[4] the Secretary of Pope Clement VII, that he had heard of Lefèvre's honourable confinement, under strong guard, in Gascony (Nérac lay near the borders of Gascony); that a nobleman, having made inquiry of Lefèvre regarding his opinions of the Lutherans and Catholics, and having received the answer that everything depended on which were guided by the Spirit of God, exclaimed that surely he (Lefèvre) believed that Catholics were directed by God's Spirit, whereupon Lefèvre, shrugging his shoulders, said, "I am sure I do not know."

[1] Erasmus, in his acute and witty way, gives an exceedingly neat interpretation to the congé granted to Lefèvre: "Lefèvre d'Étaples has been, like another Enoch, taken up by the French King, who has forbidden anyone to write either in his favour or against him"—Ep. to the Bp. of Augsburg, 11th August, 1530, *Eras. Op.*, III, 1302F.

[2] *E.g.*, the case of Claude Baduel—Herm., III, 190, n. 2, and that of Gauchier Farel, brother of Guillaume—*Ibid.*, 169 *et seq.*, 324, n.1.

[3] Herm., I, 111, n. 10.

[4] This letter is numbered 363 in Herm., II, 386-8.

I cannot make up my mind what to think of this conversation. Lefèvre may possibly have expressed himself wittingly. I have learnt, however, for certain from a common friend of ours who dwells at Tournai,[1] that, when Lefèvre was dismissed from the Court, he went, or was despatched, to a fortified town called St. Paul, which belongs to the King's sister, and where, through this princess's favour, the bishop is one Jean Gérard by name. . . .[2]

In the main his errors are of no great moment, although at their first publication their novelty gave them an appearance of importance: at that time it was an unheard of thing that one should alter the smallest syllable or even amend a text corrupted by coypists in the ancient versions used by the Church. Nowadays quite another business occupies us than that of translation, and a new version, into which no false doctrine is introduced, is not now accounted any great affair. . . . If only Lefèvre were to make a little recantation of some passages, even as St. Augustine did, everything could easily be put right. . . . But Lefèvre is so far from us that it would suit best to prevail on him, through the intervention of some worthy prince or nobleman, to betake himself to Italy, because as long as he is beside this Gérard, nothing will succeed. . . .

And so it was made evident, by this ardent curialist and papal envoy, that all along the censures passed upon the old Étaplois rested on no solid grounds.[3] Even this extreme partisan could discover, in the biblical labours of Lefèvre, only a few objectionable passages and these merely such as required a trivial retractation. We think it difficult to find anywhere a

[1] Herminjard, II, 386, n. 3, suggests that Clichtoue is meant.

[2] Aleander made several errors here. Probably enough, in view of Queen Margaret's statement, Lefèvre, on his way to her, visited Michel d'Arande, Bishop of St. Paul-Trois-Châteaux, in Dauphiny. That town, however, did not belong to Queen Margaret. "Jean Gérard" is obviously a mistake for Gérard Roussel.

[3] When Lefèvre's version of the Old Testament appeared at Antwerp in 1528, it contained a commendatory notice from a theologian of Louvain, whose orthodoxy was unimpeachable— *Ibid.*, II, 388, note 10.

more complete justification of the old man's right to be reckoned a Catholic than this epistle of Jerome Aleander.

Another notice of him is that supplied by one who averred that he had obtained it from the Queen of Navarre herself.[1] One day at dinner Lefèvre appeared so sad that Margaret asked him the cause of his depression. Thereupon, he explained that he felt his own inability to stand before God on account of his failure to bear witness to the Gospel even to the death, as so many faithful ones were doing. The Queen exhorted him not to lose hope in God's mercy and goodness. Lefèvre then said, "There only remains to me, after I make my will, to go away to God, for I feel He is calling me."

The unhappy state of mind, with which Lefèvre's final days were clouded, continued to the end in February, 1536, if we are to trust an autographic record made by Guillaume Farel. According to this, Lefèvre, on his death-bed, was[2]

> for several days so terrified at the judgment of God that he cried out that he would perish eternally for not having openly confessed the truth of God. . . . It was dreadful that so pious an old man should have been in such anguish of mind and in such terror of God's judgment. Perhaps if he had been free, he would have had better hopes and worked for Christ. Hereupon warned, Michel d'Arande, bishop of St. Paul, replies to the letter sent him thus:
>
> To the stout soldier Gaius, engaged in the business of his King, salvation, grace, and peace.
>
> I hardly think that the passing of that godly old man Stapulensis disturbed thy mind as much as thy pious and Christian letter has terrified me . . . particularly because it portrays and sets before me

[1] From the *Annals of Hubert Thomas*—see *ibid.*, III. 400, notes 6, 7.

[2] This note of Farel's, quoted by Herminjard III. 400, n. 6, 7, is inscribed on the back of the epistle forwarded to him by Michel d'Arande, and alludes to that letter. Herminjard numbers this letter 544 and inserts it in t. III. 399-401. Its date appears to be about the month of March, 1536.

> Christ Jesus, so counselling and justly chiding me that no course is left me but to surrender myself to Him as a guilty offender. Wherefore, not to trouble thee too much, I beg and entreat thee by the same our Lord Jesus that ye will assist me with your continual prayers, and meanwhile that ye will not cease to seek means whereby I may be delivered from this depth of mire, in which is no substance. The letter-carrier will relate other things to thee and thine, and will salute you all in His Name without Whom no salvation can be hoped for. Thy Regius commends thee heartily to Christ and His Word.
>
> Thy brother Cor: Tardivus.[1]
>
> To my friend and brother Gaius Falconus.

The tardiness, of which the good bishop here accuses himself, was, in actual fact, a characteristic of many of the Meldois reformers. It is explainable.

When the French exiles returned to France from Strasburg, Roussel and Toussain, as we have seen, were attached to Queen Margaret's Court as almoners. Of the latter, mention is made in a letter of Martin Bucer (May, 1528) to Farel that he was living in Paris. But the same epistle[2] evinces the dissatisfaction of the militant reformers at the entire policy of the moderates of Meaux. Not only Bucer, but Œcolampadius (11th May, 1528) declared the impossibility of inducing Toussain to quit France and adopt a more aggressive programme.[3] A year later, Farel informed Capito of a report he had heard that Toussain had been urgently invited to come back to Metz,[4] and he expressed the

[1] Michel d'Arande had long previously adopted the pseudonym Cornelius by which he was well known to the whole Meldois company. He now added *tardivus* as an admission of his own slowness in the work of the Gospel. As Farel's name was widely known (and hated) in France, Arande inscribed this ep. to him under the scriptural pseudonym Gaius.

[2] Herm., II, 131 *et seq.*

[3] "Mihi doluit, Farelle charissime, quod Petrum nostrum ex Galliis evocare non potuimus" — *Ibid.*, 133.

[4] Toussain had spent a large part of his childhood at Metz, and had already (in 1525) worked there as a preacher—Herm., I, 338, n. 5, II. 484.

hope that Toussain's preaching there would be attended with success,

> for, as for France, I do not see what can be done at all under such a worthless ruler (*insano capite*) as one who forbids the people to have the New Testament, so that there remains no means to them of learning the truth.[1]

Toussain only quitted France in 1531, when, as a matter of fact, the position of every member of the Meldois company had become precarious in the extreme. He took refuge at Zurich,[2] but for some time he showed a reluctance to take part in the work of reformation as Farel and his friends were conducting it.[3] Eventually he joined them, but was never quite in harmony with them.[4]

Gérard Roussel was the other almoner of the Queen of Navarre. With her he came to Paris at the beginning of 1533, and preached there, during Lent of that year, before large congregations. In spite of all the precautions he took, he attracted the ever vigilant hostility of the Sorbonnists. In her defence of the preacher, Margaret displayed some spirit, and intimated to her brother the King that Roussel was no heretic and deserved something better than to be burnt.[5] Béda and his associates, therefore, met with a different recep- from that which they had expected, when they carried their complaints before the King, for he ordered them to fix their abode at not less than thirty leagues from the

[1] *Ibid.*, 179.

[2] Ep. of Farel to Zwingli, July or August, 1531—*Ibid.*, 356.

[3] *Ibid.*, 365. See his ep. to Farel, written in 1533—Herm., III, 3-11.

[4] See his epp. to Farel, 1st May, 1535, and to Blaarer, 13th May, 1535—*Ibid.*, 285-6, 291-2. For some later notices of Toussain, consult Dr. Jean Barnaud, *Pierre Viret, sa vie et son œuvre* (1511-1571), Saint-Amans, 1911, pp. 250 *et seq.*, 294 *et seq.*

[5] See her letter to Montmorency, May, 1533: "Le Roy trouvera qu'il est digne de mieulx que du feu, et qu'il n'a jamais tenu opinion pour le mériter, ny quy sente nulle chose hérétique"—Herm., III, 53. Observe also Siderander's ep. to Bédrot—*Ibid.*, 54 *et seq.*

capital.[1] The cause of this command of the monarch was as follows.[2] Roussel had been preaching in the Louvre and the theologians did not like this. They approached the King on the matter, but he, in contempt, referred them to the Chancellor, the Cardinal-legate Antoine du Prat, who passed them on to the Bishop of Paris, Jean du Bellay. This prelate, however, gave no heed to them. Thereupon, they applied to the First President (of the Parliament), but he, though by no means hostile to their cause, complied rather with the manners of his superiors than his own inclinations. Béda and his friends, as a last resource, adopted the dangerous plan of inciting the populace against the Queen of Navarre and her preacher. The King, accordingly, ordered an examination to be conducted into the alleged heresy of Roussel and the seditious behaviour of Béda. No incriminating evidence was forthcoming for the former, and, as for the latter, the King, being further exasperated, held an investigation into the authorship of the seditious proceedings which had taken place. The reply given to his inquiries was that they originated with the doctors of the Faculty of Theology (*ex consensu et placito Magistrorum Nostrorum*). When the matter was brought before these, they denied the statement. Therefore, the entire responsibility fell upon Béda and three of his associates, who, consequently, incurred the royal sentence of banishment. Roussel, on the contrary, rose immeasurably in the general estimation, and there seemed to be setting in a marvellous change in public opinion at both Paris and Lyons regarding those objects which Roussel had so much at heart.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, 53, n. 4, 56, n. 20.

[2] Ep. of Sturm to Bucer, 23rd August, 1533—*Ibid.*, 72 *et seq.*

[3] Herm., III, 75, notes 20 and 21, quotes a letter of Berthold Haller to Bullinger, 25th August, 1533, in which it is related that Cardinal Cajetan, in a book that appeared about this time, expressed opinions not greatly different from those of the Evangelicals, and that when the Sorbonnists attempted to condemn the work they were forbidden by the

Although they had abandoned their leader Béda, the theologians fostered in their hearts a bitter hatred towards Queen Margaret and her protégé Roussel. On 1st October of the same year, a comedy was performed at the Collège de Navarre in Paris, in which both the Queen and Roussel were, to the delight of the theologians present, held up to ridicule. As this affair contravened important statutes relating to the King's honour and majesty, the President of the College was put in prison.[1]

It is not to be imagined that the vexations which he suffered from the obscurantists disposed Francis to favour the opposite party, the Evangelicals. There can, indeed, be no doubt as to his own personal views about these latter. In a letter addressed to the Council of Berne (20th October, 1533), he announced, with scant courtesy, that he intended to be Very Christian both in name and act, and, consequently, meant to drive out every atom of heresy from his kingdom.[2] Almost immediately after, a fierce persecution of the French Evangelicals arose, and Nicolas Cop, a son of Francis's favourite physician, experienced the severity of the new policy. Cop had been elected Rector of the University of Paris, and had delivered an inaugural address to that corporation on 1st November, 1533. The address,[3] though read by Cop, had been written by John Calvin (then comparatively unknown), and, as it contained some references to the doctrine of

Chancellor of Paris to do so " ne quid definirent sine Scripturis." Even the Pontiff threatened the Sorbonnists with his anathema, because the book in question bore, on its title-page, the papal approbation. Truly, time had altered (but for the moment only) the fashions that were in vogue when poor Berquin was burnt.

[1] Epp. of Sturm to Bucer, and Calvin to Daniel, October, 1533—Herm., III, 93 *et seq.*, 106 *et seq.* In addition, King Francis (24th October) compelled the University to reverse its condemnation of Margaret's book, *Le Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*—Bulaeus, VI, 238.

[2] Herm., III, 96.

[3] *Ibid.*, 418 *et seq.* An extract from the autograph MS. of this famous discourse is there given.

Justification which were suspected of heresy, Cop found it advisable to flee to Basle for safety. On 10th December King Francis instructed Parliament to execute with diligence the laws against heresy.[1]

In the fluctuations of the King's foreign policy the recall of Béda and the imprisonment of Roussel (towards the end of 1533),[2] formed merely moves in the game, for, in the early portion of 1534, he reverted to his previous decision, releasing Roussel and imprisoning Béda on a charge of lèse-majesté.[3] But this did not indicate a mitigation of the vigour directed against the aggressive Evangelicals for one of them was burnt at Paris on 18th June, 1534.[4] Nor was the mischievous and wanton act of posting the placards which contained inflammatory denunciations of the Mass, during the night of 17-18th October, 1534,[5] conducive to any relaxation of the repressive measures in course of execution.[6] Far from it. Imprisonments and burnings forthwith became almost indiscriminate in consequence of the blind fury that sprang from the outraged sentiments of the people.[7]

[1] For this royal mandate, see *ibid.*, 114 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, 146, n. 2, 159, n. 2.

[3] Epp. of Nicolas Cop to Bucer, Basle, 5th April, 1534, and Myconius to Bullinger, 8th April, 1534—*Ibid.*, 158-9, 160 *et seq.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 16. 2, n. 16; *Cronique du Roy Françoys premier*, p. 111, n. 1.

[5] These placards were affixed not only in Paris but at Orleans and Amboise (where the King was staying), and at other places throughout France—*Journal*, etc., pp. 441-2; *Cronique*, etc., pp. 110 *et seq.*; Herm., III, 225-6. The text of the placards is given in the appendix to the *Cronique*, etc., pp. 464-72.

[6] Lutheroth (Henri), *La Réformation en France pendant sa première période*, Paris, 1859, pp. 15-6, declares that Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, and the leading clergy of the capital, had been negotiating with King Francis for the introduction of a reformation based upon the Confession of Augsburg, but the posting of the placards destroyed all hopes of success for this project.

[7] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1505c, E (Masson's ep. to Erasmus, 29th June, 1535); the *Journal*, etc., pp. 443-52; and the *Cronique*, etc., pp. 110-4, 129-32, 136, afford some idea of the appalling number of the burnings and mutilations of heretics which followed the posting of the placards nd the religious commotions among the people incident thereon.

But, if the placards had offended the religious sensibilities of the people, the subsequent holocausts shocked not to say Christian feeling, but the very commonest instincts of humanity. Even Pope Paul III felt shame at the scandal and (June, 1535) begged the French King to abate the severities meted out to the heretical Evangelicals.[1]

As for Roussel, he continued in his office of almoner to the King and Queen of Navarre. His royal patrons, towards the close of 1535, nominated him to the see of Oléron, left vacant by the death of a relative of the King of Navarre. They recommended him so warmly to the new Pope that Paul confirmed him in the preferment.[2]

Thus, of the Meldois sodality, Lefèvre was ending his days in quiet but regretful retirement at Nérac ; Michel d'Arande was administering an episcopal charge, no doubt to the best of his ability, but in complete sequestration from reforming enterprises ; Gérard Roussel, by a similar promotion, was finding himself reduced to a like inactivity ; Vatable had already become Professor of Hebrew at the Collège Royal in Paris,[3] and, owing to his freedom in interpreting the Scriptures according to the Greek and Hebrew texts, had not been altogether free from the attentions of Béda.[4] Briçonnet, after having lain for a considerable number of years under the distrustful vigilance of Béda's party,[5] at length

[1] *Journal*, p. 458. Cp. the ep. of John Sturm to Melanchthon, 9th July, 1535—Herm., III, 311. Cousin gave Boniface Amerbach (4th November, 1534) a favourable report of the character of the new Pontiff and added, "Italus est, et scribunt eum Gallis favere"—*Ibid.*, 221, n. 10. Erasmus, *Op.* III, 1513A, says that there was a rumour that Henry VIII had helped to induce Francis to greater clemency towards the Evangelicals.

[2] Bulaeus, VI, 936: "Verum resipicisse & ad Ecclesiam Roman. revertisse fatentur ipsimet Haeretici. Viuebat adhuc an. 1537."

[3] Bulaeus, VI, 221, says 1529 ; Herm., III, 161, n. 10, says 1532.

[4] In 1533-4, Béda cited Vatable and some other professors of the Collège Royal before Parliament on this charge, but it was disallowed—Bulaeus, VI, 237, 244 ; Herm., III, 161, n. 12.

[5] Herm., III, 158, n. 4.

retired from his see, and, a short time later, died at his own château of Aimans (24th January, 1534).[1] Of the remainder, Pierre Toussain, as we have seen, hesitated for some time to join the militant section of the Evangelicals, but ultimately decided to cast in his lot with them. Pierre Caroli, though he had to flee from France and consorted with Farel and Viret (early in 1535),[2] began very soon to be a source of trouble to his new associates, with whom it is questionable if he ever really agreed in religious opinions.[3] He married in 1535, and was appointed chief pastor at Lausanne, but his teachings there were so opposed to the doctrines of the Evangelicals that they deprived him. No little disturbance arose over the business, which ended in Caroli's applying to the Pope for absolution (which was granted) and in his recall to France by the King.[4]

We have left Erasmus to the last. A few words will here suffice; it is unnecessary to dilate upon the final particulars of his life, since numerous biographies of him have described, and that too in eloquent language, the pathetic situation of this wonderful man during his closing years. His sharp pen, keener than any sword, fenced busily with his many adversaries, and he never delivered a thrust without drawing blood. Nevertheless, though not one to shirk a literary contest, inasmuch as he had become conscious of his invincible prowess, he quitted Louvain for Basle, believing that at the latter place his daily life would be more peaceful. In this conclusion he was correct, for, except from extreme Evangelicals such as Farel, he received every

[1] *Cronique*, p. 101; Bulaeus, VI, 936.

[2] Herm., III, 237, n. 12, 295, n. 11; *Cronique*, p. 130; Barnaud, *Viret*, pp. 155 *et seq.*

[3] Herm., III, 337, 373, 389.

[4] *Ibid.*, IV, 94, 105-9, 234-42. See the ep. of Caroli to Pope Paul III, June, 1537—*Ibid.*, 248-51. Extracts from the Pope's reply are given by Herm., IV, 251-2. The recall of Caroli by King Francis is recorded in an ep. of Myconius to Bullinger, 26th July, 1537—*Ibid.*, 266 *et seq.* Cp. also Barnaud, *Viret*, pp. 244 *et seq.*

mark of consideration and respect from the inhabitants, and with many of the reformers there he had most amicable relations. From this secure retreat, he not only fought with, but laughed at, the champions of both parties.[1]

Since the publication of his *Praise of Folly*, no humorous composition of his was so censorious and resentful as his *Epistle to the Impudent Jackdaws*, written during his residence at Basle.[2] He begins it thus :—

> Des. Erasmus Rot. quibusdam Fratribus absque observantia, bonam mentem.
>
> By this document I give you notice, Brethren and Fathers, bribe, lie, deceive, and contemn the ordinances of the Emperor and Bishops, put forth your surreptitious pamphlets, henceforth I shall not lower myself to read, much less confute, your trash. God Himself will search out all impious hypocrites, and I commit you to His just judgment.

In a sarcastic mood, he reminds them of the vigour, mental and bodily, that God still continues to him, and recounts all the works which the " delicate old man " has done and is doing.

> Where then is that old death's-head tottering into the grave (*decrepitum ac mox collapsurum silicernium*)?

Then Erasmus, apostrophizing the upright and respectable, exclaims :—

> Pious Fathers, restrain these donkeys ! Pious laymen, when ye hear them raving thus, withhold your generosity. . . . For the future, I will treat them with disdain, and I ought to have done this long ago. Let the frogs croak ! and let them say, with a fine contempt for all law, human and divine, " We ought

[1] For his witty jests upon the marriages of the Lutherans and Evangelicals, see *Eras. Op.*, III, 1139B, 1071E : and for his caustic reply to the criticisms of the obscurantists on Luther's marriage with Catherine von Bora, a former nun, see *ibid.*, 919F.

[2] *Desiderii Erasmi Epistola ad quosdam impudentissimos Graculos*, for which see *Eras. Op.*, X, 1745-6.

> rather to obey God than men "—words right enough in the mouths of the Apostles, but by no means suitable in theirs: for the God is not the same in each case: among the former the God was the Creator of heaven and earth, among the latter the only deity is their belly. Farewell.

Although from time to time persistently urged by the Evangelicals to join their party, Erasmus found Basle, on the whole, a quiet place to dwell in and much more convenient for his personal safety than many other towns would have been at that period. But when at last the reforming party had gained such a degree of power in the town as to win it over altogether to their side,[1] Erasmus judged it wiser to quit it: the overtures of his Evangelical friends were likely to become too eager to accord with his desires.[2] He certainly did not, and could not, agree with their opinions.[3]

No sooner did he arrive at Freiburg than he indited a long epistle to them which corresponds with his *Letter to the Impudent Jackdaws*, save that the brutal irony of that composition was exchanged for the unjust causticity of the more elaborate epistolary treatise which he directed against the "so-called Evangelicals."[4] A few extracts will sufficiently illustrate the tenor of this entire treatise:—

> Ye say that evangelical truth has been buried for more than a thousand years until ye resurrected it for us. If that be correct, ye have a more difficult task before you than the Apostles in former times. . . . The utterances of the prophets declared that the

[1] Herzog (Dr. J. J.), *Œcolampade, le Réformateur de Bâle*, traduit de l'allemand et abrégé par A. de Mestral, Neuchatel, 1848, pp. 259-72.

[2] Ep. of Erasmus to Pirckheimer, 9th May, 1529—*Eras. Op.*, III, 1189.

[3] Ep. of Erasmus to Œcolampadius (written before he left Basle, 1529) —*Ibid.*, 1221c-f. Cp. Herzog, pp. 247-58.

[4] *Desiderii Erasmi Epistola contra quosdam, qui se falso jactant Evangelicos*—*Eras. Op.*, X, 1573-1587. It was inscribed to Vulturius Neocomus, a pseudonym for Gerard Geldenhauer, and was followed by two short epp. of later dates ostensibly addressed to Eleutherius and Grunnius

> Gentiles, leaving the worship of demons and images, would come to the knowledge of the true God. It was likewise foretold concerning the ceremonies of the Jews that they would fade away like shadows before the bright light of the Gospel. But, in the things ye reject, what absurdity or ridiculousness is there, pray? . . . I am not now speaking of fasts or vestments or rites, which even hypocrites do feign, but a readiness in submitting to trials, a gentleness in bearing injuries, a frank disposition, kindly, unconscious of malice and eager to be on good terms with all men, a resignation to all human vicissitudes and a holding light carnal advantages—it was these that gave value to the teaching of the Apostles. If they called the people away from old customs, they offered them things far better. . . . Among accustomed things there is none meets your approval, but ye root up the tares and the wheat, or to put it better, ye root up the wheat instead of the tares. . . . Statues have been cast out of the churches, but what does that signify, if none the less vices are worshipped as idols in the heart? . . . Solemn prayers have been relinquished, but now there are very many who offer up no prayers at all, though continual and chaste prayer is the most suitable sacrifice for Christians to offer. The Mass has been abolished, has there anything as sanctified taken its place? . . . Confession has been abolished, but very many now hardly confess even to God. Choice of meats has been discarded along with the fasts, but there is plenty of debauchery, and, in fleeing from Judaism, they have fallen into Epicureanism. . . . The Apostles had no prescribed fastdays, it is true, but they fasted daily of their own accord. They knew nothing of differences of meats, but of their own free choice used only the commonest, and that, too, with the greatest frugality.[1]

And so on. His argument reviewed in the same strain the several points wherein the Evangelicals were at variance with their opponents. If the treatise served no other purpose, at any rate it rendered undeniably

[1] *Eras. Op.*, X, 1577D-1578F.

evident to all men that, though many things amongst the obscurantists and curialists displeased Erasmus, the Evangelicals and the Lutherans did not present him with the solution to any of the problems thus raised for him.[1]

He had retired to Freiburg drawn there partly by a desire to reside where his attitude towards the reformers would not be misconstrued by his friends on the imperial and papal side, and partly with the hope of leaving his bones in a district wherein some of the old familiar ideals of Catholic Christendom still found a home. But when he departed from Basle he quitted a large company of kind friends whose intimacy he had learnt to appreciate, however much he might censure their opinions and methods. These he missed in Freiburg. Accordingly, after the lapse of some years, during which he dwelt, not altogether unhappily, at the latter place, he returned to Basle, in order to superintend the publication of some fresh compositions. It was fated that he should never again leave it. The malady from which he had been long suffering took a new form. He became very feeble, but not yet entirely incapacitated from the labours of overseeing the production of his works.[2]

His last extant letter is that to Conrad Goclen, dated 28th June, 1536.[3] In it, he mentioned that at Basle he had many affectionate friends such as he had not at Freiburg, but he added,[4]

> nevertheless, on account of the disturbances over doctrines, I would rather end my life elsewhere. If only Brabant were nearer!

The playful wit, for which he had been famous, remained with him to the very end. A few days before his death when three of his friends came to visit him, he jestingly compared them to Job's comforters. On 12th

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 1349A. [2] Drummond, II, 335-6.
[3] *Eras. Op.*, III, 1521-2. [4] *Ibid.*, 1522B.

July, 1536, he passed away with the exclamation of "lieber God" on his lips.

To a certain extent it was fitting that he should thus have died in a Protestant town. There at least he could receive funeral honours that had no censure of his erudition or prohibition of his books to mar them. If, as the monks prophesied, in their vile Latin, he died *sine lux, sine crux,* that is, without those consolations to which the ignorant had assigned a fictitious value, this, in all probability, accorded with his own desires. At any rate, the last testaments of all three great Christians (and Catholics), Colet, Lefèvre, and Erasmus, though these men had not embraced the principles of the militant reformers, displayed one remarkable feature in common: not a penny did they bequeath for masses, or obits, nor did they make any so-called religious benefactions. A coincidence of this kind is not without significance.

Followed by magistrates and professors, students from the University bore his remains to the Cathedral where they lie buried, with a stone tablet to mark the place.[1]

His friends, More, Fisher, and Warham had predeceased him. He had lived long enough to see the shattering of the final hopes of a really Catholic reformation, as every champion and open promoter of it had exchanged the buffetings of ecclesiastical partisanships for the purely Catholic repose of Paradise. When he had reached that point in his earthly life, Erasmus had lived too long. He himself realized that fact a few months before his demise, when, on reviewing his correspondence, he noticed how many of the writers had passed away. Thereupon, he sighed and exclaimed:[2]

> Nec ego diutius vivere cupio, si CHRISTO Domino placeat. (And I, too, have no wish to live any longer, if it be the will of Christ the Lord.)

[1] Drummond, II, 338.

[2] Ep. of Beatus Rhenanus to the Emperor Charles V, 1st June, 1540—*Eras. Op.*, I, in Praef., * * * 3.

CONCLUSION

THE year 1536 was one in which the western Church presented to all the world the spectacle of a house divided against itself. Serious disruptions had taken place; the quarrels and disputes which had begun within the fold of the Church had become complicated with many and various issues. Parties were now well advanced in the process of formation whose aims were not always the amelioration of ecclesiastical affairs. There can be no doubt but that, if wise measures of improvement had been introduced into the Christian estate at any time during the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, in accordance with the insistent demands from every quarter of Europe, the terrible conflicts, not only religious but political, of the sixteenth might have been avoided (consult Mr. Francis Fortescue Urquhart, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, III, *sub voce* "Christendom," p. 704). But the forces that had retarded the accomplishment of this desirable object had been reinforced by others more openly hostile, and, in the issue, when reform came, it bore a shape of which its first promoters had not dreamt.

So far, indeed, as the purely ecclesiastical problem was concerned, two parties were, at this juncture, distinctly marked out: the reformed or Evangelical or Protestant, and the obscurantist or curialist. To one or other of these every Christian was obliged to belong. Erasmus and Lefèvre had been able to hold themselves aloof from both, but if their age had been cast a decade or two later than it was, they also would have had to

solve for themselves the same difficulties as confronted their younger friends and compatriots. The time truly had arrived when intimate associates found themselves parted sharply asunder by the new circumstances which had arisen. Many of them had together striven for the betterment of the Church ; their ideals had been high and noble, their projects pure, their Catholicity unquestionable, their amity cordial. But, though ancient friendship still existed, though kindly sentiments of mutual esteem and goodwill were common amongst opponents who had once been comrades, an increasing series of fresh causes of cleavage were separating them more and more, were, in fact, opening between them a chasm which could not be bridged. Wolfgang Köpfel (or Capito), Gerard Geldenhauer (Noviomagus), Pierre Toussain, and numerous others, had ranged themselves on the side of the Evangelicals. Caesarius of Jülich, Philip Engelbrecht, and Glareanus ; John Clement, Cuthbert Tunstall, William Latimer, and Richard Croke ; Roussel, Arande, Budé, and Queen Margaret of Navarre, had definitely taken their stand with the curialists. Crotus Rubeanus had quitted the reformers, and made his peace with the obscurantists. Agrippa in vain protested that he was no Lutheran but a Catholic ; his adherence to the curialist party became the only invincible argument he could have employed to vindicate his Catholicity.

It must not be imagined that the men who had long advocated the removal of abuses, ceased, at any moment in their subsequent careers, to regard a reformation in the Church as necessary or desirable. On the contrary, they still longed for it, but they had learnt from experience that the hopes by which in former days they had been animated were illusory : they had witnessed the occurrence of events which rendered the fulfilment of these desires impossible. Men are, after all, the playthings of circumstances, and, however high

their aspirations, they cannot be sure of noble achievements; unbidden things intrude themselves into their schemes, and what, at one time, appeared a clearly marked road leading to a wished-for goal turns out to be so intersected with side-paths that, at length, the original goal is missed and another quite different is reached. The Catholic reformers had striven for a Catholic reformation; they saw themselves, in the end, compelled to make a choice between advanced curialism and a reformation which many of them intuitively believed to harbour the germs of infinite secessions.

Imperceptibly, during the period which has been under consideration in this treatise, the ideals of Catholicity had been altering, and were destined to alter still more, and western Christendom was perforce endeavouring to adjust its powers of thought, not only to the conditions upon which reform might be obtained, but to the new meanings that were being assigned to this title of orthodoxy. None had as yet lost the desire to be accounted Catholic, but, though all held that the term signified soundness of doctrine, their views of the centralizing authority which was implied in its connotation had become various. Some had adopted the curialist interpretation of ecclesiastical authority that had been hitherto struggling for general acceptance. Some, but these were now, by the pressure of events, diminishing in number, believed, as did Aegidius of Viterbo and Pope Adrian VI, that the persistent advance of the claims of the papacy should be curbed, and the seat of authority recognized as pertaining to the Church Universal. Others, the Lutherans and Evangelicals, had convinced themselves that the final court of appeal was the written word of God. Scripture for them gave the decisive sentence; but, since each individual exercised his own powers of discernment as to what the sacred text meant, amongst the reformers Catholicity and purity of doctrine became practically synonymous terms. Others still, such as Henry VIII of

England, with his courtiers and abettors, were passionately eager to continue Catholics, though they disputed the right of the papal jurisdiction to be regarded as an essential to the enjoyment of Catholicity. These, accordingly, fell back on the expedient of attaching to a temporal monarchy an extraordinary amount of magisterial power over its own national division of the Church, thus attempting to import into the signification of the title "Catholic" an element altogether new to the Christian people of that age.

Besides the many perplexities of the ecclesiastical world, the conflicting aims of the political augmented the general mass of complications. No ecclesiastical question could now be without its political side; politics had entered very largely into the domain of religion, to the detriment of the latter. Henceforth, therefore, reforms could only be devised which were in strict accordance with political expediency; some men might advocate the papal claims, others Protestant independence of the rights of national churches, but, willingly or unwillingly, they had to take into account the political aspect of their teachings.

Out of all this turmoil has been evolved the present-day condition of western Christendom. For good or ill, we are divided. It would seem as if no good thing can come into this world of ours unaccompanied by some evil. Division amongst Christians is such an evil; but, apparently, a purification of Christianity could not be wrought except at this heavy price.

We must, indeed, confess that Protestantism—to employ a modern appellative which will comprehend all the various bodies of reformers who, from the sixteenth century to the present time, have aimed at a revival, and in some cases a reconstruction, of religion, outside the Roman communion—has shown itself to be, on the whole, the home of intellectual freedom; and no marvel is here, for without this freedom Protestantism could have had no permanence. Yet, it must be observed,

the freedom of one person may be so emphasized as to curtail seriously the liberty of another ; illustrations of this truth have been at all times abundant in the records of Protestantism. But, on the other hand, the ready obedience of Roman Catholics to the dictates of the ecclesiastical power to which they have given their allegiance has appeared to many outside their communion a token of mental serfdom. And it may well be questioned if a rigid system of unfaltering obedience can be beneficial to the mind and soul of every man in equal degree. We, indeed, believe that there are some particulars of religion in regard to which each Christian should be admonished to exercise responsibly his spiritual manhood ; that large numbers actually, though not always with conscientious frankness, do so more frequently than is commonly imagined, we think capable of proof. Among Christians, it is true, a Catholic spirit ought to prevail, but we are convinced that it should be one which would manifest itself not only by that consideration for the interests of all upon which alone premanent unity can be based, but by the candid recognition of the inalienable rights of the individual. For many centuries Rome has placed herself before Christendom as the central power in the Church (*magistra ecclesiarum*), and Christendom is as cognizant to-day as in former ages of the advantages which would accrue to religion from a centralized form of government. Rome, however, during the past four hundred years, has imposed conditions upon union which have proved her abhorrence of all liberty of thought, as well as of the individualistic claims of Protestantism.

Our survey of the events of the sixteenth century, therefore, awakens in us feelings of regret at the disruptions which then took place in the Christian Church. Nevertheless, we are not unmindful that God, in His merciful providence, has, in spite of the faults and errors then committed by the belligerent parties, in spite of the impatient vehemence of one and the cruel fury of

another, in spite of the conflicting ambitions and the warring leagues of that period, brought out of these tumults of the past great benefits for all.

Regret is vain if it be unfruitful in hopes for the future. What the ages to come have in store for Christendom is known to God alone. The yearnings of our own epoch for the union of all who name the ineffable Name of Christ cannot fail to be productive of salutary results, even if the day of their manifestation lies in the distant future. Almost insuperable obstacles stand in the way of their fulfilment, but patient and faithful hopes founded upon the will of God to do, and the power of God to perform, cannot for ever meet with disappointment.

We have seen the attempts at reunion, begotten of passionate longings for a restoration of the former ideals of Catholicity, which were made or contemplated during the century that followed the rending of the western Church : the cherished scheme of Archbishop Cranmer to effect an organic union of all the reformed bodies of his time ; the proposals of Sully for the establishment of a " Christian Republic " under the presidency of the Roman pontiff ; the tentative efforts of the English Church, in the early years of the Stuart period, to unite with the Calvinistic Churches of the Continent, with the Eastern Church, and with the Church of Rome ; and, in addition, the revival of a similar project in the days of Bossuet. A consideration of these endeavours to heal the divisions of Christendom impels us to express our unfeigned appreciation of the noble instincts of those who designed them. But a recollection of the miserable failure which attended each of them might, perhaps, lead us to the imprudent decision that reunion on any extensive scale is now outside the range of human probabilities, that the passage of the ages, instead of supplying new clues to a solution of this religious problem, will only enlarge existing difficulties and contribute others, that, in short, all real Catholicity belongs to the past history of the Church. Such pessimism,

however, should have no place in the Church of Christ ; it were far wiser, and certainly more consistent with the credenda of our religion, to avow that there are no impossibilities with God. The glorious vision of a reunited Christendom instinct with faith, hope, and fraternal love, is, no doubt, for the present a fascinating dream, and nothing more. But it is beyond our power, it pertains not to us, to cast aside this vision. The efforts towards re-union in the past may, in truth, be seen to have met with failure, because that which alone could crown them with success was absent. Until, indeed, Christendom itself, imbued with the spirit of its divine Lord, proclaims, as with one voice, its desire for a restoration of corporate unity, it would be vain to imagine that that beatific vision will transform itself into a reality. For that happy consummation of the prayers of all the servants of Christ, for the fulfilment of His testamentary wish, " that they may be one even as We are one," the many sections of the Church are by duty bound to offer up ardent supplications. It may be that God will not deem it advisable to comply with the petition otherwise than by merging the union of the Church in the still more stupendous issue of the Coming of the Kingdom. But, at the same time, we know that, if He judges it profitable to His Church on earth, the power is His to make us one.

APPENDICES

I

ROMANCE has surrounded the origin of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam with mystery. Erasmus himself has been not a little responsible for this, owing to the autobiographical details he furnished in an epistle to Goclen (*Eras. Op.*, I. Praef.). Till quite lately these particulars were accepted as substantially true. According to this account a young man of Gouda, named Gerard, the youngest but one of a numerous family of sons, was destined by his parents for the priesthood. He, however, loved a girl named Margaret, daughter of a physician. Though Gerard was in some minor orders, the pair would seem to have been betrothed. Consequently, Gerard and his parents quarrelled, and he abandoned his home, leaving behind him the girl he had intended to marry. He wandered to Rome, where he lived as a student. Whilst he was there, his relatives sent him a lying message that the girl had died. So grief-stricken was he that he devoted himself to religion and became a priest. On his return to his native place he discovered the trick, and learnt that, in the meantime, Margaret had borne him a son called Erasmus (or Gerard), the famous scholar of later days. Though now the priesthood was an insuperable barrier to a closer union between Gerard and Margaret, yet, if the betrothal actually did exist at the time of the birth of Erasmus, this would have constituted a ground of legitimacy for the child. Such is the account that Mr. Charles Reade has woven into a story which the late Sir Walter Besant described as the greatest historical novel in the English language, *The Cloister and the Hearth*. Unfortunately for the pretty romance, recent critics have proved that Erasmus was not the only child of the priest

Gerard and Margaret, and, moreover, that their younger son, the great scholar, when suing (in 1516) for a papal dispensation to cover the defect of his birth, advanced no plea of irregularity, but openly professed his illegitimacy (*Eras. Op.*, III, 1821 *et seq.*; Nichols, I, 14-16; Allen, I, App.).

After he had received instruction in several schools, notably that at Deventer, and his parents being now dead, Erasmus was induced by his guardian to enter a convent (*c.* 1482). Monasticism became uncongenial to him; he had never desired it, at least so he represented in later life, but certainly not during his sojourn in the convent at Stein (see Nichols, I, 88). Having attracted the notice of the Bishop of Cambrai, an ecclesiastic belonging to the family that possessed the lordship of Bergen, he was taken out of the convent and attached to the episcopal retinue (*c.* 1493). About a year later, he obtained through his new patron facilities for proceeding to Paris for purposes of study. From time to time he revisited the Netherlands.

In Paris he dwelt for a short period at the College of Montaigu, but the inferiority of the sustenance, both bodily and mental, disagreed with him. He therefore retired from it, and tried to maintain himself as a teacher of Rhetoric, and to continue his studies. In 1496 he entered into residence at the English boarding-house, in which were several pupils of his, among them Thomas Grey, a friend who figures largely in his subsequent correspondence, Robert Fisher, a cousin of Bishop Fisher, and William, Lord Mountjoy. The last proved to be a loyal patron and friend to Erasmus for many years, and was the means of introducing the needy scholars to the best supporters Erasmus ever had.

Either when he was an inmate of the Bishop of Cambrai's palace, or perhaps still earlier, Erasmus made the acquaintance of James Batt, who occupied an official position in the town of Bergen-op-Zoom. Batt quitted Bergen for the Castle of Tournehem, where he became tutor to the son of the Lady Anne of Veer. Tournehem belonged to Antony of Burgundy, whose son the Lady Anne had married. She was now a widow, but she continued to live with her father-in-law and to preside over the household of the bluff old warrior. From her

Erasmus hoped to obtain, through Batt, some reasonable assistance. With this object in view, he went to Tournehem for a short visit (early in 1499), but the result was not all that he had expected. Soon afterwards the invitation to visit England came, and accordingly Erasmus made that brief sojourn in London and Oxford which produced such momentous effects upon his career.

Of Tournehem Castle hardly a vestige remains. The village of Tournehem (pronounced locally *Tournon*) lies to the north-west of St. Omer, about two miles off the main road that runs to Calais, and in all ten or eleven miles from St. Omer. A ruined gateway, through which one enters the village from the St. Omer side, is probably the sole remnant of Lord Antony's old residence. None of the inhabitants appear to know anything of the history of the place, although likely enough the village itself stands upon the site of the Castle. In the valley which stretches past Tournehem towards Licques are numerous tokens that this neighbourhood was once largely occupied by the aristocracy.

It may be of some interest to note that when Henry VIII was marching on Thérouanne in his campaign of 1513, the French cavalry, with the Chevalier Bayard among them, lay in wait for him close by the Castle of Tournehem, but owing to the timidity or incapacity of their commander, the Lord of Piennes, they withdrew, instead of attacking. Their retreat formed the prelude to the Battle of the Spurs. See *History of Bayard by the Loyal Serviteur* (translated by Loredan Larchey, London, 1883), Bk. II, Chap. XLVI.

II.

Apologia Erasmi Roterodami, refellens quorundam seditiosos clamores apud populum, qui uelut impium insectabantur, quod uerterit, In principio erat sermo. . . . Basileæ apvd Io. Frobenivm, An. M.D.XX.

Pp. 139-141.

Marqvardvs De Hatstein Canonicus Moguntinus, Ioanni Coleto, Decano ecclesiæ sancti Pauli Londini. S.D.

S Vm apud me sæpenumero demiratus tuam felicitatem, qui tali fortuna tam insigni loco natus, per teipsum adieceris mores et ingenij cultum istis ipsis bonis forte concessis abunde respondentem, ea quidem est tibi eruditio, ea pietas, ea uitæ consuetudo atque suauitas, ea denique constantia Christiana, ut sub tot fortunæ muneribus parum laborare uidearis, quin excelso animo tramitem Christi sic percurris, ut nemini ex illorum numero, qui se mendicitatis nomine uenditant, sis priores concessurus. Nam illi permulta simulant atque dissimulant uentris causa. Vt nuper cum cruentissimi belli, perquam horrendum classicum intonabant, Christi imaginem tu contra depinxisti, exhibentis oliuam pacis conciliatricem, hoc est ad tolerantiam, ad concordiam, ad cedendum commodis nostris, propter fratrum utilitatem cohortabaris, nedum aliena non inuadenda. Neque esse causam belli aiebas, Christianis cum Christianis, qui arctissimis inter se sacramentis conciliati sunt, in amorem plusquam fraternum, et id genus multa, tanta autoritate disseruisti, ut uere dixerim Christi uirtutem de Coleto prominuisse, qua tenebras insidiantes aduersariorum tuto discussisti, aduersus ueritatem furentes, placiditate prope apostolica uicisti, ac insanos impetus dimovisti leniter, ut nihil per innocentiam detrimenti acciperes, etiam si numero, (quoniam malarum rerum ubique est uberrima messis) sententiam istam tuam quæ potior fuit, exuperarunt. Ad hæc tantis dotibus, ut Achilli, Homerus, Erasmus, accessit diligentissimus præco, qui notas uniuersæ Angliæ admirandas orbi ac posteritati

præposuit, potissimum autem Coleti, quem sic descripsit, ut nemo bonus sit ubique gentium, quin te vehementer obseruet. Videor mihi uidere, quod alteri plurima contulit, uter autem suo amico inter uos plura, etiamnum ambigo. Nam ille beneficium a te suscepit, quod is uix eris, qui præter mendacium, ornante stilo, maximus per eum fieres. Tu autem ut libere quod sentiam explicem, nonnihil gratiæ, qua plurimum polles, uideris illi debere, utputa in lucem proferenti uirtutem istam, pridem nobis ignoratam. At opinor te nihilo secius uictorem in beneficijs præstandis, qui ERASMVM peregrinum, tuæ Angliæ, alioqui uirum incomparabilem, tot amicis bearis. Sunt enim ei apud Anglos Montioij, Mori, Linacri, Tuntstalli, et quicquid est bonorum uirorum, quos Germania de monumentis Erasmicis sedulo admiratur et effert. . . . Nempe ut clarissimum istic sodalitium literis ad nos scriptis testetur, quam non sitis uniquiores ERASMO, communi amico nostro, facti ex bile et impotentia istius homuncionis, (he means Lee) desiderio nominis usque adeo insanientis. Quæ res totam Germaniam uobis arctius deuinciet, quamquam pridem arctissime est deuincta. Equidem ad tuam excellentiam potissimum scribo, qui sacris initiatus, te mihi exemplum, tum ex uerbis, tum ex literis ERASMI coepi habere. Vtinam liceret imitari tam accurate quam ex animo cupio. Sperarem mihi non solum literas meliores, sed etiam uitam sanctiorem. Vale in Christo. Moguntiæ. VI. Calen. Maij. Anno. M.D.XX. Et aliquando tuis literis nos digneris, quibus intelligemus Anglis cum Germanis adhuc optime conuenire, quod assequemur testato erga ERASMVM amore.

Mr. Seebohm, *Oxford Reformers,* p. 469, suggested 1519 as the correct date of the above epistle. The allusions in it to the Frankfort Fair, which took place in April, and to Lee's book, make this almost certain.

III.

Illustrium Virorum Epistolæ, leaf t. II, recto—Edition of 1519.

F. Joannes Quonus Prior Cartusiæ prope Sanctum Odomarum, Venerabili Domino Jacobo Fabri Magistro Parisiensi.

Eternam in Domino Jesu Salutem. Audiui Joannem Reuchlin admirabilis ingenii uirum, Parisium in breui fore petiturum, uirum inquam, quem aliquid supra hominem esse suspicor. Quis enim nisi stolidus aut malicia excæcatus fructuosissimum illius non miretur diligatque laborem? o si hunc audire mihi liceret. Nempe ab olim ingens mihi inest desyderium audiendi, quid doceat illa sublimis Cabalae scientia, quibusue principiis adipisci possibile sit, quam tantopere extolli audiui. Confido, quia dum uenerit, illi indiuiduus comes iugiter adhærebis. Infœlix ego, qui uestro colloquio adesse non possum, quod certe me delectaret super omnes delicias. Obsecro mi Præceptor uenerandissime, ut ab eo sciscitari non pigeat, an (quemadmodum pollicetur in suo Rudimentorum libro) scripserit de punctis, de prosodia, ac de longis et breuibus. Et ubi huiusmodi libri impressi reperiantur. Denique si quid de scientia Cabalistarum ab illo eradere poteris, obsecro vel breui epistola illius participem me facere digneris. Erubesco certe hoc a te tam familiariter exigere, quia uicem reddere non possum. Sed tuae liberalitatis ingenuitas, quam optime noui, ausum mihi præstat. Et si talis sim qui tibi, quod te dignum est, retribuere non possit, eum tamen qui te grandi diligit affectu, rogo, ne contemnas, quem si idoneum habere nequis remuneratorem, habebis tamen quoad uixero pro sua salute apud Dominum deuotum oratorem, qui te sua bonitate semper bene ualere faciat. Ex Conuentu Fratrum Cartusiensium uallis Sanctæ Aldegondis prope sanctum Audomarum. XXIIII. Julii.

The contents prove that the above letter belongs to the year 1514. On June 19th, 1514, Reuchlin wrote a lengthy vindication of himself to the Parisian Faculty of Theology —Bulaeus, VI, 63-65; Geiger, *Briefwechsel,* p. 218-23. Probably, after he had despatched this ep. to the Sorbonne, he had meditated a journey to Paris to advance his cause, as Quonus hints above; but, of course, the decision of the Faculty on August 2nd would have rendered the visit—of which no record exists—unnecessary.

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